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OZWALD BOATENG THE PEACOCK OF SAVILE ROW

MAGAZINE

THE INDEPENDENT

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Indonesia's new president moves to stamp his authority by removing protesters from parliament building Jakarta: troops take on students

By Richard Lloyd Parry and
Stephen Vines in Jakarta

SCORES of Indonesian troops advanced into Jakarta's parliament complex late last night, trying to clear it of the thousands of students who have occupied it for the last few days.

The army action was the first indication that the new government of former vice-president Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie had lost its patience with the demands by the student movement for democracy, and a line was being drawn after Thursday's resignation of President Suharto. Mr Habibie named a cabinet yesterday that removed some of those closest to the former president, but left many of the old guard in place.

Lines of armed troops moved into the complex at about 11.30pm local time and hundreds of students fled from the grounds into the main parliament building. Troops used a loudspeaker to call on the students to leave the complex peacefully.

The students have been in the complex since Tuesday, first demanding the ousting of former president Suharto and then that of his successor, Mr Habibie. There was no immediate violence but there was great tension. Students had gathered in the lobby of the main parliament building, pulling on their university blazers and linking arms.

"We will not give in, we will not run away," said Andi, one of the students. "The military is going against the wishes of the people. We cannot allow this. We will stay and fight."

At the roads around the parliament building were sealed off, as the army grouped to reclaim the building from the demonstrators who have been roaming around it without restraint, chanting slogans against the Suharto regime, and daubing them on the walls.



Protesters standing on top of parliament buildings in Jakarta this week; soldiers moved in last night to clear thousands of students who had occupied the complex. Photograph: David Gray

Earlier in the day there had been a stand-off between Muslim demonstrators who appeared at the building and told the students to put an end to

their demonstrations. That confrontation ended peacefully, but was apparently a warning of more serious action to come.

That action appeared in the form of Green Berets from the Strategic Reserve, who brought empty trucks into which the stu-

dents could expect to be man-handled. "Disperse, disperse!" the military police shouted, carrying M-16 rifles, truncheons and tear-gas canisters.

The military chose a moment to act when divisions had started appearing among the stu-

dents, and when they were presumably exhausted after days of protest. Nevertheless singing could be heard inside the building as the army waited outside.

Marjuki Darusmani, the vice-chairman of the National Committee on Human Rights, said

"It's very surprising that it's happened like this. General Wiranto [the army chief] said today that they should end the demonstration but it was no more than a hint. It wasn't an ultimatum."

The new Indonesian cabinet has a substantial military pres-

ence - six serving or retired army generals - as well as six prominent Muslim figures. Most are members of the ruling Golkar party who may now be hoping to serve until 2003, when Mr Habibie will finish serving Suharto's term.

For God, country, and at least £1m

By Adam Szreter

IT USED to be regarded as an honour to play football for England, but it seems that is no longer enough. Not content with a four-year deal that could earn them £600,000 each as England squad members - in addition to earnings from their clubs and sponsors and a share of a £1m jackpot if England win the World Cup - Alan Shearer and his comrades are holding out for more.

Details emerged yesterday of a deal the Football Association is offering players, who have so far failed to agree terms. A regular England squad member would earn £600,000 over the next four years. In return they would have to sign 500 items such as balls and shirts at the team hotel every year and make an average of three personal appearances in 12 months. They would be paid an additional £5,000 for each appearance.

The main sticking-point for the players is whether they can continue to wear their "Three Lions" England shirts while working for sponsors who do not have agreements with the FA and are possible commercial rivals.

The players can still ask to use the Three Lions emblem for personal deals and the FA insists authorisation is given in nine out of 10 cases. But the players believe they should not have to seek permission first. A senior FA official said yesterday: "No one wants to call the England players greedy... but they also have to have a sense of responsibility to the official sponsors and to the game itself. We will not be giving in."

Landslide predicted for 'Yes' vote



Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president, with constituents after voting in Belfast yesterday. Photograph: Brian Harris

By David McKelrick
Ireland Correspondent

SUPPORTERS of a "Yes" vote in Ireland's double referendum last night predicted a convincing win of more than 70 per cent.

Voters came out in enormous numbers in Northern Ireland, with observers in some areas reporting local turnouts exceeding 90 per cent. The belief is that a high vote will help the "Yes" camp.

A senior nationalist politician said: "Some have been calling it the Good Friday agreement and some call it the Belfast agreement. I believe that after this vote it will be the people's agreement."

On the other side of the coin, William Thompson, an Ulster

Unionist Party MP who has been prominent in the "No" camp, claimed a majority of Protestants would not support the accord. He said: "The mood today is definitely anti-agreement. People have been sickened by the pressure from outside Northern Ireland and many of those who were voting 'Yes' when the campaign started have decided otherwise."

Most observers, however, say they have detected a clear swing towards a "Yes" vote in the final few days of the campaign, with some of the most optimistic on the "Yes" side believing that something close to a landslide could be on the cards.

The result in the Irish Republic, where a parallel referendum was held yesterday, is

regarded as an utterly foregone conclusion, with scarcely a "No" voter to be found. The turnout, though high, is however expected to be lower than in the north.

Unless the northern "Yes" vote percentage reaches the upper 70s, there will be sharp controversy over whether a majority of Unionists have endorsed the accord. The loyalist "No" campaigners claim that a "Yes" vote of 74 per cent is needed to demonstrate a pro-agreement Unionist majority, but this is contested by most commentators as an unreasonably high figure.

Some 1,175,000 people were entitled to vote, putting an X in "Yes" or "No" boxes beside the question: "Do you support the agreement reached at the multi-party talks on Northern

Ireland and set out in Command Paper 3883?"

The ballot-papers from 583 locations throughout Northern Ireland will be taken to the King's Hall in south Belfast where counting is to begin at 9am today. A result is expected by early afternoon.

The Irish Prime Minister, Bertie Ahern, said in Dublin: "I am glad it is a high poll. One of the things that bothered democratic politicians over the years was that we couldn't find a structured way to get a democratic framework to the people to vote on. We have tried that in the last 30 years, the last 75 years. This is their opportunity to influence events. It is an appointment that the Irish people have with history."

Sinatra has it his way from beyond the grave

By Andrew Marshall
in Washington

FRANK SINATRA'S will ensures that the battle for his inheritance will be bitterly fought for a long time, but the battle will be conducted in secret.

In an effort to head off arguments he added a condition that anyone who contests the document will be disinherited. So disagreements over the division of the estate, estimated at \$200m (£122m), between his widow and children are virtually guaranteed to remain below the surface. But with his records still

selling a million a year, lucrative back catalogues and rights to the name and the familiar, the fights are likely to go on for years.

The will, disclosed on Thursday, shows that the bulk of the estate went to his widow and children. His widow, Barbara, inherited all his property, including homes in Beverly Hills, Malibu and Palm Springs. She also got all the silverware, paintings and books, a Mercedes and a Rolls, and 25 per cent of his other personal belongings. The 1991 will guarantees that she will receive at least \$3.5m.

The children, Francis Junior,

Tina and Nancy, each received cash bequests of \$200,000, which seems a small amount for a man who was worth millions. But lawyers cautioned that the bulk of his estate had already been put into a trust fund. This would cover the majority of the royalties and much of his investments. Frank Junior was also left his father's sheet music.

There have long been rumours of clashes between family members, and the details of the will stoked further speculation of a row over the division of the estate. But without knowing how much is in the trust, and

how it is divided, it is hard to know who ends up with exactly what.

The children are known to have clashed repeatedly with their stepmother, Barbara, whom Frank married in 1976. Tina, the most outspoken of the three, has led them in clashes over the rights to Sinatra's music, and Tina and Barbara also fought over the design of a Frank Sinatra tie, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. Tina wanted it to figure the younger Frank; Barbara wanted the older, greyer man. Tina won, but the tie didn't do very well any-

way. The children control the Reprise Records catalogue, which covers Sinatra's career from 1960 to 1988. But Barbara benefits from the 1993 deal with Capitol Records.

Sinatra's first wife, Nancy, was left \$250,000 in cash, and he also left an extra \$1m to a trust fund established in 1983 for his grandchildren.



Today's news

Everest slips from reach

Stephen Goodwin comes within 100m of the peak of Everest, separated by a narrow crest and that awkward rocky barrier, the Hillary Step. Page 3

CJD claims

A total of eight families who lost relatives to CJD following treatment with human growth hormone yesterday won the right to claim compensation from the Government. Page 7

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This week

"He used to
be a divine cleric.
Now he's
a holy terror."

SATURDAY REVIEW This evening our weekly arts discussion includes a review of Aislinn O'Hanlon's dark new novel. Tom Sutcliffe also looks at the Liverpool Tate, Glyndebourne and BBC's 'The Human Body'. Saturday evenings, 7.02 - 7.45.

"A dashing major.
A married woman.
An officer's mess."

THE CLASSIC SERIAL continues with 'Effi Briest'. Theodor Fontane's masterpiece of love and passion on the Baltic Coast with a conclusion as bitter as the climate. Sunday afternoons from 24 May, 3.02 - 4.00. Repeated Saturday evenings at 9.02.

"Broken hearts.
Robbery. Murder.
(And you were looking
forward to a
quiet bank holiday?)"

THE AFTERNOON PLAY, 'The Greening Summer'. Rumer Godden's coming-of-age tale set in France before World War II. Jess falls for the charming Eliot but he ends up stealing more than her heart. Bank holiday Monday afternoon, 2.15 - 3.45.

"Be merciless this
Wednesday."

Laugh at newsreaders'
performances in bed."

THE WAY IT IS. Our new bedtime comedy show takes a satirical look not just at the week's news, but also at how modern news is presented. Speed newscasters, Richard Richard and vain Lilly Swain, are your hosts for half an hour of fun. Wednesday nights, 11.00 - 11.30.

"Tropical jungles.
Parched deserts.
Mountains of dirty socks.
(Welcome to the
real world of our foreign
correspondents)."

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT. In-depth slices of life from the BBC's 250 foreign correspondents around the world. Kate Adie introduces tales that mix the extraordinary with the everyday. Thursday mornings from 28 May, 11.02 - 11.30. And Saturday mornings, 11.30.

"Lisa l'Anson's lipstick
stays on for 28 minutes."

LIPSTICK PLEASURES. Tool of seduction. Call to arms. Key to the executive washroom. Oh, and you put it on every morning. Hear Lisa l'Anson on lipstick and why there's more to this little cosmetic than meets the eye. Friday morning, 29 May, 11.02 - 11.30.

"In some,
love inspires poetry.
In others, ratatouille."

VEG TALK. Charlie Hicks and Greg Wallace get passionate about greens in a new series featuring chefs, recipes, growing tips and more than a little fun on the side. Friday afternoons from 29 May, 3.02 - 3.30.

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YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.



Hillary Step, an hour's climb from the summit, where the writer was forced to abandon his attempt to climb Everest

Photograph: Chris Bonington

We were 100m from the top of the world hanging on to what felt like a washing line. We had to turn back

NOT MUCH more than an hour's breathless climb from the summit of Everest, a well-judged "Let's get the hell out of here" from the American mountain guide Eric Simonson signalled the end of my attempt to reach the top of the world.

About 20 of us were clustered on Everest's South Summit. At 8,760m, we were little more than 100m below the main summit of the Mother Goddess of the Universe, but separated by a narrow crest and that awkward rocky barrier, the Hillary Step. And we had no rope.

Momentarily, it was a relief. As the column of climbers was halted, I was able to push my oxygen mask hard against my face and suck in the cool "O"s until my chest stopped heaving. Before that I'd been taking no more than five steps at a time, or maybe only one if it involved a sharp pull up on the rope, before having to rest.

The mask had become a part of me. Moisture trickled from the things at every gasp. It had frozen in my beard and that, in turn, had frozen to my jacket. It became impossible to lift my head without a painful, icy tearing. Dawn had come up gloriously over the arid lands of Tibet to the north and I'd barely been able to appreciate it, mixed in the blinding column of would-be Everesters.

The sun brought another discomfort. With the mask clamped to the bridge of my nose, my prescription glacier glasses had to perch some distance from my eyes, allowing the glaring light in above and around the lenses. Only now, three days later in Base Camp, is the bruised pain behind my eyes subsiding and one eyeball is still blurring. I should not complain. The day ended with several Sherpas and others being led down snow blind.



STEPHEN GOODWIN

Everest Diary
Base Camp

The talk about Everest being stitched up all the way to the top, and all that's needed is a strong pair of lungs, does not hold good on the first climbing day of each short season. And on 19 May a mix-up, to put it at its politest, by the heavy-weight teams who had offered to fix ropes on the steepest, or most exposed, stretches meant the safety line ran out.

The wind was whipping over into Tibet and there were some 35 other people between us and the collection of tents we had left nine hours earlier at the South Col. That is quite a crowd for a steep mountainside and by the time the retreat was over there were falls, injuries and nasty cases of snow blindness, but fortunately no fatalities.

Had all, or even most, of those climbers - Brits, Americans, a Bolivian, Iranians, two Swedes, a Canadian, a Dutchman and many Sherpas, to my knowledge - made the summit, it would have been a record day's attendance for Everest. It stands in the low 40s. The next day, with a Sherpa placing a rope at the Hillary Step early in the morning, 21 people made the summit, notably four Iranians who had been in the frustrated cluster on the South Summit.

In a show of strength and guile, the Iranians left oxygen bottles high on the mountain when they were forced, like us, to turn back. After a few hours' sleep at the col they then re-

turned more lightly laden to complete the climb when the fixed ropes were in place.

The South Summit was the literal high point of an exhausting rollercoaster of a week for myself and at least some of our Himalayan Kingdoms Expeditions team. It started when the leader Dave Walsh, Rob Owen, a stockbroker, and myself left Base Camp for what we thought would be a single night away, to inspect the damage to our Camp II in the Western Cwm wrought by the 100mph storm of 11 May.

At first sight the destruction seemed so complete that we feared the show might be off. Tents were flattened, poles broken and gear soaked, if not missing. We slept the night surrounded by salvage in a dome tent battered to half its size. Optimism rose as we reclaimed the site over the next couple of days. But then we heard an extraordinary weather forecast that a cyclone was on its way from the Bay of Bengal and would strike the Everest region on the night of 19-20 May, dumping two metres of snow.

Something close to hysteria broke out among the teams gathered at Camp II. If the forecast was correct, the best thing to do was to go for it. But was it correct? There were 12 hours of feverish radio exchanges, disagreements and politicking, the upshot of which in our case was that last Sunday four of us - myself, Rob, the Canadian Byron Smith and the New Yorker David Callaway - were heading up the Lhoze Face to Camp 3, a six-hour grind in the baking sun up steep snow and ice.

Camp 3 offers one of the best views in the world, directly over the Western Cwm and the peaks of the Khumbu. It is also one of the most costly, if you are sleeping on oxygen at \$350 a bottle a night. And it can be a

fatal spot if you forget to clip into a safety line when stepping outside.

The route continued next day, higher up the face. Four hours of continually exposed climbing later - looking down is a slide of maybe a kilometre - I arrived at the South Col, a pretty desolate spot. It would have been good to admire the views of Tibet and Nepal, but the priority was to get tents up in the biting cold, weighting them with rocks, then drinking as much fluid as possible before getting some rest.

Dave Walsh had joined us, but coming up from Camp II to the col in one go he had knocked himself out, and was coughing blood. Rob Owen also decided he would not be trying for the summit. He had had signs of altitude sickness earlier in the trip and decided that health and happiness with his new wife meant more to him than a mountain he had paid \$25,000 for a chance to climb.

We also heard that Pemba Tsering, one of the Sherpas with our second party, had been hit by a hurtling block of ice on the Lhoze Face and had a suspected broken leg. A tricky rescue operation was in progress.

So it was just Byron Smith and myself who set out with Sherpas Nima Gyambu and Tsering Dorjee, both former summiters, in a column of climbers intent on utilising the weather window. Setting out at 11pm in

the pitch dark from a campsite at almost 8,000m, wearing an oxygen mask and down clothing as bulky as a Michelin man, is a disorienting experience. I found myself stepping gingerly up an ice bulge which daylight would reveal to be relatively easy-angled. Even so, there are accidents here.

The steepening slope could best be judged by the line of head torches below us. My own packed up - a faulty bulb - but by then there was partial moonlight. Usually most of this 600m slope is roped. In its absence five people have fallen, including an elderly American who is being stretched down the mountain as I write.

Another casualty further up the south-east ridge was Tommy Heinrich, a tough Argentinian with the Everest Challenge expedition led by Tom Whittaker. Heinrich, a previous Everest summiter, tripped while descending and slid more than 100m, puncturing his right arm with his own ice axe and sustaining multiple cuts and bruises. Nevertheless, he was able only hours later to help Whittaker down from the South Col when the Anglo-American, who was planning to become the first amputee to climb Everest (he has only one foot), developed signs of pulmonary oedema, a potentially fatal altitude sickness.

The falls and physical breakdowns came as no surprise. As we ascended the steep ridge to

the South Summit the queuing was more reminiscent of a supermarket check-out than a supposedly wild mountainside. As each section of rope was placed we shuffled up, as many as 20 people clipped to a rope barely half the diameter of that used by an individual rock climber in Europe - not much more than a washing-line. Repeated warnings against putting too much strain on the rope and its "shitty" ice screw anchors were shouted by Simonson, and largely ignored.

As we crowded on to the South Summit and the learnt the truth about the missing rope - perhaps 150m would have been needed to secure the Hillary Step and the most exposed bits of the ridge to the summit - teams jostled to take photographs and then to turn round to begin the descent, passing on the bad news to bemused climbers who were still coming up.

Looking across at the main summit with its increasing snow plume, I had little doubt I could have made it if the step had been roped up. It would have taken perhaps another hour, and despite the traffic jams we had enough time in hand for that and for the return.

Disappointment was, however, tempered by the thought that with 57 people on the mountain in a gathering wind, the casualty list could have been longer and bloodier had the rope not run out.





Salman Rushdie, author:

'I had hoped they would be doing more for the arts by now'



Sir Peter Hall, theatre director:

'I've been told not to rock the boat. But they've got it wrong and a few of us have to say so'



Ken Loach, film director:

'Chris Smith's philistinism is sad... He should be President of the Board of Trade'



Alan McGee, music magnate:

'If things don't improve, they won't be getting my money next time'

Betrayed: the luvvies Labour's lost

By Jack O'Sullivan

IT seemed like an ideal setting for a summer celebration of Labour's relationship with the arts. The cool sophistication of the Tate Gallery, chilled wine and famous names on the guest list for the launch of Chris Smith's new book, *Creative Britain*. Who, on Wednesday night, could doubt the Government's commitment to the arts as the busy Culture Secretary spoke of wrestling till three in the morning with the first such work to be published by a Cabinet minister in 30 years?

Quite a few, it seemed. An event which a year ago would have been littered with so-called "Labour luvvies" lacked glitter. Sir Peter Hall, veteran director and staunch Labour supporter, had been blackballed for a stinging attack on Government policy earlier in the year. "These days, I'm *persona non grata*," says the former director of both the RSC and the National Theatre. Likewise, Ken Loach, film director and far-left critic, received no invitation. "It spared embarrassment all around," says Loach, with whom the Culture Secretary recently declined to debate on Channel Four. Meanwhile, many top names not yet struck off the list made their excuses. Melvyn Bragg, yet to feel any favours of Government patronage, failed to appear, as did Ben Elton who has gone lukewarm on Cool Britannia.

Wayne Hemingway, founder of Red or Dead, the multi-million-pound fashion empire, was not tempted by his invitation. "It was beautifully designed. I thought at first it was an invitation to a trendy art show. A year ago I would have gone. But this year it wasn't my cup of tea. I preferred to spend the evening with my wife and kids really."

Among those who did turn up, some were willing to wait longer before passing judgement. "It's still early days," said the novelist Hanif Kureishi. "Chris Smith seems to be a serious person. He has written a book. I think we need to give him a little time." Others were less flattering. "I had hoped that they would be doing a bit more for the arts by now," said Salman Rushdie. "There are an awful lot of theatres out there which are in real trouble. The Government should be doing something for them," explained the author as a smiling Chris Smith bounded over and declared: "I don't think we've actually met."

Fortunately, for Chris Smith, the event was not marred by protests. But tempers are frayed.

So what has soured the love affair between the arts and the Labour party? The presentation to Chris Smith at the Tate of an eccentric piece of art by sculptor Bill Woodrow may have offered a hint. It featured a transparent turtle, filled with a hundred pennies, trying to stay afloat, while chained to a clump of books. It was meant to symbolise the nominal £1 Chris Smith received in royalties. But one wag said it marked the difficulty the arts have in staying afloat with minimal funds, because of the Government's freeze for two years af-



Chris Smith and Mathew Evans of Faber & Faber admire the transparent turtle at the Culture Secretary's book launch

Photograph: Jason Belf

ter the General Election on fresh spending commitments.

"People like me," says Sir Peter Hall, "have suffered 20 years of progressive starvation under the Conservatives. What we need now is some financial support. Chris Smith is an amiable and nice man, who makes the right noises, but he does not have any money."

"Tony Blair said before the election that there was going to be a new era for creativity. Creative people were going to be treated well and looked after. So far, there is no evidence of that whatsoever. They managed to find £750m for the Dome, yet the Greenwich Theatre closed for want

of £150,000. We are talking about a couple of hundred million pounds which could transform our futures and those of our children."

This week's resignation by the entire panel of drama advisors to the Arts Council also exemplifies Hall's concerns. They resigned saying that the business management style of Gerry Robinson, the new Arts Council chairman, has cut out artists. "In the Sixties when I was on the Arts Council," says Hall, "we had people on it like Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland and CP Snow - genuine artists. But you can see now that the artists have made their final exit. One suspects that this Gov-

ernment, like the last one, is rather pleased when artists walk. It is evidence of drama and liveliness. It's an excuse for using Thatcherite vocabulary that was meant to denigrate artists."

For Wayne Hemingway, the problems with the Government run deeper. He says, coming from a working-class background, that he would never have gone to university in the early Eighties, had there not been strong state funding. "You need £15,000 now, but that would have frightened me off. I was brought up in a pub and I'd have got a bar job and played safe, hoping maybe to be a bar manager one day. I'd never have taken the risk and start-

ed Red or Dead, where I employ 100 people now."

"This chance to go to university for people like me has been vital. It has given us three years to be subversive and push back the boundaries. But a lot of people like me, with creative potential, will be frightened off by the cost." Meanwhile, Ken Loach condemns Chris Smith for his attitude to the film industry. "When he spoke at the London Film Festival, his benchmark for success was entirely financial. So *The Full Monty* and *Bean* were the ones he highlighted. But you would think that the Culture Secretary would have a broader sense of what makes a film

a success. It is about reflecting a society back on itself through images and stories. Chris Smith's type of philistinism is sad. He should be President of the Board of Trade if he wants to talk like this."

All this increasingly vocal opposition has got Labour worried. "I've had senior Labour peers telling me not to rock the boat," says Sir Peter Hall. "They say, 'you're not doing yourself any good'. But I don't mind. They have got it wrong and a few of us have to say so."

There are signs that the campaign is beginning to bear fruit, at least in the pop industry, which the Government is far more interested in appeasing than other out of favour "elitist" arts. Labour grew concerned when Jarvis Cocker of Pulp and Ian Broudie of the Lightning Seeds ended their love affair with Labour. Worries grew when Alan McGee of Creation Records described Tony Blair as "all surface". McGee became one of the chief critics of the Government's welfare to work policy on the grounds that it would kill off fledgling bands. He declared: "Of course, the likes of me and Noel (Gallagher) are there to be used, especially before the election. But you hope for a little bit more beyond the surface. If things don't improve they won't be getting my money next time."

This week it emerged that Alan McGee had hammered out a deal which will allow some 16-24 year olds, aspiring to pop stardom, to go on a college music course or work placement in the industry. When I tried to contact him, his spokesman said: "Alan's attitude is that he would rather talk to the Government than the media."

This attitude is gaining support among those worried that too much haranguing from the wings will alienate this Government just as it did the last. Stephen Daldry, director of the Royal Court Theatre, says: "It is most important to point out, when people say Labour has betrayed its election promises, that it's not true. People misconstrue Labour's support for the arts as central to the regeneration of the country. There was no financial commitment. The arts establishment is living in a fairyland if it ever thought that the Government was going to turn up with a magic wand and make everything better."

But David Puttnam, ennobled by Tony Blair, is the strongest voice calling for an end to the sniping. Currently plucking to be deputy director-general of the BBC, Puttnam is as close the arts community gets to having someone in the Prime Minister's office. He says that the arts establishment has failed to understand the manifesto properly. "It was quite clear that there would be a moratorium on new spending for two years. What we should be doing now is working out coherent and effective ways of spending money, when more eventually becomes available. I think a lot of my colleagues are making a big mistake. People see that we cannot even agree among ourselves. It's a problem that bedevilled us for 18 years. If I was the Government, I would throw up my hands and say, 'Sod them'." It looks like the drama is only beginning.

Nice suits, but are Blair's babes doing the business?

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

AN attack on the "gender apartheid" and "genitalia politics" of Labour's women-only shortlists yesterday provoked strong reaction from the ranks of the party's 101 women MPs.

Writing in the latest edition of *Tribune*, the Labour weekly, Ann Carlton said: "They are at it again - the whinger wing of Labour feminism, as confused as ever and wanting favours."

"Once, Labour men were so horribly

sexist (allegedly) and Labour women so pathetic (allegedly) that only by women-only shortlists could the poor dears become MPs. Now with nearly half the Labour Party's members women, there are different demands. Now it is 'constituency twinning' for the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly, with the often reluctant twin constituencies required to choose one man and one woman."

She claimed that voters and the vast majority of Labour Party members believed that ability, dedication and experience should determine a person's suitability to be a candidate - implying that

was the basis on which male MPs were selected, and that women should be given no additional support. But Ms Carlton added the more damaging charge that the additional injection of women MPs at the last election - 121 out of 659 Members - had not made a blind bit of difference to the political scene.

"Before the last election," she said, "we were told that parliamentary selections based on genitalia politics would mean a transformation the House of Commons."

"Thanks to women-only shortlists, the Labour benches would be awash with

brightly coloured women's suits, and those women MPs would stand up for women's issues in a way that male MPs had not done. We have seen the suits - very nice and quite expensive. The politics are no different."

She said that there had been no great rush of women to support lone parents or defend the disabled from Government attack, while several women MPs appeared to enjoy a good moan about the lack of creche facilities, or the burden and hours of parliamentary work.

But Ann Cwyd, the veteran Welsh MP, yesterday deplored the attack, pointing out

that before she entered the House in 1984, there had been no Welsh women MPs for 34 years, and she was the only one right through to last year's General Election.

"They say we should get into the Commons on merit - like the men. If that were true, there would be dozens more women MPs," Ms Cwyd said.

Jane Griffiths, new Labour MP for Reading East, was also selected without an all-women shortlist. She said: "Why should it be assumed that women are going to make a particular kind of impact, as women? Some individuals will make a

great impact, others will make less. She is just making false assumptions."

Caroline Flint, who was selected as Labour candidate for Don Valley without the benefit of all-women shortlist, said Ms Carlton was not living in the real world and challenged the notion that the women had made no difference.

"Where's Ann Carlton been?" she asked. "A national childcare strategy, minimum wage legislation, one million after-school places, childcare tax credits, employment rights for part-time workers. The impact of women on Labour policy is staring us in the face."



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Nurses fall out over account of confessions

By Andrew Buncombe

GROWING evidence emerged yesterday of the breakdown in the relationship between Deborah Parry and Lucille McLauchlan.

In Saudi Arabia, the two nurses had been close; they spent 17 months in a cell together. But by the time they arrived back in Britain they barely had a word for each other. "I just said goodbye and she said 'See you again sometime' - though I doubt I ever will," Ms Parry told the *Express*.

At the heart of this breakdown is the way in which Ms McLauchlan, 32, was said to have encouraged Ms Parry, 39, to confess to the savage killing of their colleague, Yvonne Gilford. Both have sold their stories, to the *Mirror* and the *Express* respectively. Both have different stories to tell.

Ms McLauchlan insists that she only signed a confession because she feared she was about to be raped. She says she encouraged her friend to confess because she had been told they would both be released if she did. But it is the manner in which she encouraged her to confess that appears to have upset Ms Parry's supporters.

"Debs told us that what happened was that Lucille was offered her freedom if she named Debbie as the killer so the whole case could be put to rest," Ms Parry's brother-in-law, Johnathan Ashbee, said last year. "And the police told Debs that if she confessed, as she and the victims were both West-erners, it would be all over in a couple of weeks and she could go free."

Ms Parry's sister, Sandra, also told the *Daily Mail*: "Lucille has a lot to answer for. But for her, I don't think my sister would ever have been in prison."

In her interview with the *Express*, Ms Parry said she had been held for several days, with her captors interrogating her for up to 12 hours a day, repeatedly telling her that she was guilty. She said that Ms McLauchlan

then entered her cell with the police. "I did not know Lucille was there until she walked in and said, 'Debbie stabbed Yvonne in the chest, neck and back,' she had written in her diary. 'After this I was slapped across the face, my hair was pulled and my feet stood on. I was shocked, distraught.'"

In her account of what happened, Ms McLauchlan admitted she had been forced to accuse her friend. "I just parroted it. Repeated what I had been told to say like a puppet because what else could I do," she said.

Ms Parry's friends have also said that had it not been for Ms McLauchlan, Deborah may not have ever been arrested. She had been persuaded to go shopping with Ms McLauchlan when she was arrested on suspicion of stealing Ms Gilford's bank card. Ms Parry was arrested at the same time.

Despite what they may have been told, the full confessions of the two nurses did not lead to their immediate release. Instead, Ms Parry was sentenced to death while Ms McLauchlan was sentenced to eight years imprisonment and 500 lashes.

Although both women claimed they had been tortured into their confession by the threat of sexual abuse, the Saudi authorities last night dismissed the allegations as "laughable".

The Saudi ambassador in London, Ghazi Algosaihi, said his country did not regret the decision to send the two nurses home, but rejected claims that they were innocent. "If you go around any prison in the world and ask inmates whether they committed the crime of which they are convicted, I suspect the vast majority of them will deny the charges. I think human nature works that way," he said.

"I think anyone with even the slightest knowledge of Saudi society, its deeply religious and conservative nature, will realise that any allegations of sexual abuse are laughable. Saudi Arabia is convinced that its judicial system is capable of delivering justice."



With evidence growing of a breakdown in their relationship, Deborah Parry (left) and Lucille McLauchlan (right) are now facing an inquiry by the nurses' governing body

Nursing body to investigate complaint by MP

THE two nurses are to be investigated by the governing body for nurses in Britain. The United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing said it was investigating a complaint made by the Labour MP George Galloway, that the nurses should not be allowed to work again, writes Andrew Buncombe.

The UKCCN has the power to strike off its register any nurses convicted of serious offences in Britain. If a nurse is not on the reg-

ister, he or she cannot legally work. Lucille McLauchlan, 32, has been summoned to appear at Dundee Sheriff Court next month charged with stealing £1,740 from a dying patient. The council indicated last night that if convicted she will almost certainly be struck off.

Mr Galloway, the MP for Glasgow Kelvin, said his complaint against the nurses was in the public interest. "If I didn't believe that this was an unsavoury matter before

the signing of the tabloid deals and coverage, I certainly do now."

"The UKCC, which is responsible for nurses, needs to investigate the matter forthwith. If it had been a British conviction they would have done so automatically. I want them struck off. I don't want to see them practice," he said.

John Knappe, a spokesman for the UKCCN, said the council was currently taking legal advice on how far it should pursue its inquiries.

"There has been an allegation made against them but it would be very difficult to gather the evidence that we would require," he said. "I cannot see us going to Saudi Arabia as part of our investigation."

In normal circumstances, the UKCC employs barristers and solicitors to investigate any conviction from abroad.

This would include taking evidence from witnesses, and interviewing the nurse concerned, as

well as colleagues and the employer. The UKCC, with which 625,000 nurses are registered, receives approximately 1,000 complaints a year, 200 of which come automatically from the British courts.

Of these, about 100 lead to nurses, midwives or health visitors being struck off. Up to 80 per cent of the cases which go before its Professional Conduct Committee - many are thrown out at the initial screening stage - are proven.



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By Ben Russell
Education Correspondent

"We can guarantee to parents that this is the final chapter in the saga of ever-increasing infant class sizes. The book is now closed on infant classes being more a question of crowd control than a valuable learning experience," he said. "We have

Angela Browning, the Tories' education spokesperson, said the Government was "going backwards" and accused ministers of duplicity. "Nearly half of all county councils, and a quarter of big-city councils, expect class sizes to increase further in the next 12 months," she claimed.

The average size of secondary classes, including sixth forms, remained at 21.7. But class size for pupils of 11-16 rose from 23.4 to 23.6.

The figures also provided fresh evidence of the crisis in teacher recruitment. Teacher vacancies in schools rose from 1,814 in January 1997 to 2,359 this year.



Chaplain denies sex assault

The Judge Advocate ordered the panel to find him not guilty of a further charge of prejudice unbecoming the conduct of an officer. A third charge of harassment was discontinued by the prosecution. The hearing was adjourned until 27 May.

— John Sheehan and Paul Edwards, PA News

Stephen Mills, 35, was assaulted and then chased by the mob on the Monsall estate in north Manchester before being repeatedly punched and kicked in the head by a man. The incident started, at about 9.30pm on Wednesday, when a gang of people started banging on the rear window and door of Mr Mills' house in the Monsall estate in the north of the city. Mr Mills fled to his sister's home but later returned home. While walking back to his house he was attacked. Police said yesterday they were baffled about the motive for the murder. Anyone with information should contact the police on 0800 555 111.

A neighbour battled to rescue Gordon Colville, 27, from the blaze. Firefighters managed to drag Connor Grieve, four, and his 24-year-old mother, Angela, from the house. All three were suffering from smoke inhalation and were taken to hospital, where Connor died. The cause of the blaze, which started on the first floor, was still under investigation.

A WOMAN police inspector's career was blighted by a "wrong and sexist" decision to deny her a chance of promotion, an industrial tribunal ruled yesterday. Shirley Daniel, 49, was denied an opportunity to apply for a chief inspector's job in the career development department of the Warwickshire force simply because she was a woman, the Birmingham panel decided. The tribunal, which heard 24 days of evidence, was adjourned to allow the parties to try to reach a compensation settlement.

RUSSELL GRANT-McVICAR, son of the former armed robber John McVicar, was jailed for 15 years yesterday for a series of crimes which the judge described as being carried out "with some skill and considerable panache". He was convicted on Thursday of 16 charges of robbery, including the theft of a Picasso painting, an attempted robbery, and firearms offences.

return – including taxes.

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Chaplain denies sex assault

An Army chaplain accused of molesting a soldier's wife described the allegations as "fabrication and lies" made up by a "woman scorned", a court martial heard yesterday.

Captain Richard Landall, 41, said his job was the most important thing in his life. "I would never jeopardise my job, my vocation in any way, shape or form."

He told the hearing of rumours that the woman he was alleged to have indecently assaulted had been having affairs while her husband was in Bosnia and that during one of them she had become pregnant and had an abortion.

Landall denies harassing Mrs Brazier, harassing her husband Fusilier Sean Brazier and four charges of indecently assaulting another soldier's wife.

The Judge Advocate ordered the panel to find him not guilty of a further charge of prejudice unbefitting the conduct of an officer. A third charge of harassment was discontinued by the prosecution. The hearing was adjourned until 27 May.

— John Sheehan and Paul Edwards, PA-News

Hunt for street killing gang

A GANG of about 15 people, all but three of them teenage girls, was being hunted by the police last night after a man was beaten and stabbed to death on a housing estate.

Stephen Mills, 35, was assaulted and then chased by the mob on the Monsall estate in north Manchester before being repeatedly punched and kicked in the head by a man. The incident started at about 9.30pm on Wednesday, when a group of people started banging on the rear window and door of Mr Mills' house in the Monsall estate in the north of the city. Mr Mills fled to his sister's home but later returned home. While walking back to his house he was attacked. Police said yesterday they were baffled about the motive for the murder. Anyone with information should contact the police on 0800 555 111.

Four-year-old dies after fire

A FOUR-YEAR-OLD boy died and his mother was seriously ill in hospital after fire ripped through a house in Blackcraigs, Kirkcaldy, Fife, early yesterday.

A neighbour battled to rescue Gordon Colville, 27, from the blaze. Firefighters managed to drag Connor Grieve, four, and his 24-year-old mother, Angela, from the house. All three were suffering from smoke inhalation and were taken to hospital, where Connor died. The cause of the blaze, which started on the first floor, was still under investigation.

Policewoman wins bias case

A WOMAN police inspector's career was blighted by a "wrong and sexist" decision to deny her a chance of promotion, an industrial tribunal ruled yesterday. Shirley Daniel, 49, was denied an opportunity to apply for a chief inspector's job in the career development department of the Warwickshire force simply because she was a woman, the Birmingham panel decided. The tribunal, which heard 24 days of evidence, was adjourned to allow the parties to try to reach a compensation settlement.

McVicar's son gets 15 years

RUSSELL GRANT-MCVICAR, son of the former armed robber John McVicar, was jailed for 15 years yesterday for a series of crimes which the judge described as being carried out "with some skill and considerable panache". He was convicted on Thursday of 16 charges of robbery, including the theft of a Picasso painting, an attempted robbery, and firearms offences.

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Myster metal found

Following a bitter battle, eight families have won the right to claim compensation for the death of relatives after a medical warning was ignored

Triumph as victims of CJD error win cash fight

By Ian Burrell
Home Affairs Correspondent

EIGHT families who lost relatives to CJD following treatment with human growth hormone yesterday won the right to claim compensation from the Government.

The High Court ruling signalled a triumphant end to a nine-year battle for the families who have submitted compensation claims totalling more than £1m. The finding is likely to pave the way for many more claims.

Between 1959 and 1985 nearly 2,000 British children whose growth was stunted because of a deficiency in the secretion of growth hormone in their pituitary glands were treated with hormone from the pituitaries of human cadavers.

Two years ago, the Department of Health was found negligent in not heeding the warning of Dr Alan Dickinson, who in 1977 told the Medical Research Council about the risk of contracting CJD from the hormone treatment. The ruling cleared the way for families of victims treated after 1 July 1977 to seek compensation. Yesterday Mr Justice Morland ruled that families of victims whose treatment "straddled" the compensation cut off date could also seek compensation.

After the ruling, Stephen Irwin QC, representing the families of 13 victims, said that the Department of Health would "no doubt" consider admitting liability swiftly "so as to relieve the minds of the families". Five of the families he represents have yet to have their cases determined.

Among the successful families yesterday was that of Saul Hefferon-Walden, who died of CJD at the age of 20 in 1988.

Saul, who was treated with growth hormone between the ages of seven and 17, first became sick while studying for his A-levels. His father, Don Hefferon, of Paddington, west London, said the family put his condition down to "the average young man's lifestyle of late nights, discos and drinking cider in the union bar".

Mr Hefferon said his son had been offered a place at the Anglia Polytechnic but found his concentration and writing becoming difficult.

"I feel more distressed than angry or bitter. I had always presumed the NHS was there to really care for people... in extreme distress, whatever their particular illness," he said. "I am very happy there has been this decision, but I am sad that not all people have been included in it."

Terence Newman, another CJD victim, died in December 1990 at the age of 21 following treatment with human growth hormone between the ages of six and 18. His mother Maureen Newman, 48, from Coulsdon, Surrey, said: "I am very pleased with the judgment. I just wish it had all finished a couple of years ago for us. Now we know we have won we can let Terry rest."

She stressed that, without legal aid, she could never have fought the case. David Body, of Irwin Mitchell solicitors, representing the plaintiffs, said: "After the Department of Health was found negligent in 1996, our suggestion that all remaining cases be compensated was fought at every step... These families were fighting a government that refused a public inquiry and so had to seek their justice at court."

Leigh-Ann Mulcahy, counsel for the Department of Health, said: "My clients wish to have an opportunity to consider the judgment and consider whether or not they wish to appeal it in any way."

In a later judgment, expected in July, Mr Justice Morland will rule in test cases brought by six people who received the growth treatment and who live in fear of contracting CJD.



Maureen Newman, 48, whose son Terence died of CJD at the age of 21 in 1990; he had had 12 years of treatment with the human growth hormone

Photograph: David Rose

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Mystery over metal strips found in body

A TEENAGE holidaymaker who died in Corfu had what were probably metal strips inside her body at least two years ago, it was disclosed yesterday.

Nineteen-year-old Karen Murray collapsed on the Greek island last week complaining of stomach pains. Doctors there claimed equipment and swabs from a previous operation were found in her body.

Alder Hey Hospital in Liverpool, where Ms Murray had major bowel surgery eight years ago, said yesterday that her medical records showed that all the swabs used in the operation were removed, counted and checked.

But the mystery over the death of Ms Murray, from Birkdale, Merseyside, deepened when the hospital disclosed that X-rays taken at another hospital six years later had shown the presence of the strips.

"The X-rays taken in 1996... show what appear to be five... probably metal... strips which do not correlate to any surgical equipment or item used in the 1990 surgery," said solicitors for Alder Hey in a statement.

Doctors in Corfu said that a post-mortem examination had found surgical gauze and a number of plastic medical clips in her abdomen. The medical evidence was not returned with her body to Britain earlier this week, the Foreign Office confirmed yesterday. The swabs and

other items remained in Corfu despite requests that they should be sent to Britain.

A second post-mortem examination carried out by Dr Edmund Tapp, a Home Office pathologist, failed to establish the cause of death.

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "We are assisting with the examining officer's request for the necessary material to be sent to the UK."

Alder Hey Hospital, which operated on Ms Murray when she was 12-years-old, said it had reviewed her medical records after concerns from lawyers acting for her family.

"Those records establish that on 6 December 1990, Karen underwent major bowel surgery. During that procedure a number of swabs were used. The medical records show that all the swabs were removed and counted and checked before the surgery was finished. The operation was a complete success," said the hospital's solicitors.

They said that the X-rays taken later at Southport and Forthby District and General Hospital had shown no evidence of any swab in Ms Murray's abdomen. All surgical swabs had threads that were designed to show up on X-ray film, the hospital said.

The Southport coroner yesterday opened and adjourned an inquest into Ms Murray's death.

British lead the way in hi-fi revolution

By Charles Arthur
Science and Technology Editor

YOU can hang them on your wall, paint them, wallpaper over them, make them as small as a credit card or as big as a ceiling tile, mount them underwater or in cars. What else but flat loudspeakers – unveiled yesterday by a British company which aims to revolutionise home hi-fi from this summer. The technology used

to make the revolutionary speakers, which are less than two centimetres thick, emerged in 1993 from a British military project to soundproof helicopter gearboxes.

What the team discovered was that flat speakers which would give authentic audio reproduction were feasible. You simply had to solve a fourth-order differential equation including eight or so variables, including the size and materi-

al properties of the speaker.

"The principle is like a piano soundboard," explained Stan Curtis, chairman of the loudspeaker company Wharfedale yesterday. "A lone piano string doesn't make much noise. But the soundboard resonates, so you can hear one piano throughout the Albert Hall. Conventional loudspeakers are like violins – you need more of them to make more noise."

The flat Wharfedale NXT

speakers will cost about £200 from retailers like Dixons and Currys. They will not suit the top-end audiophile – for whom the joys of positioning speakers and producing a room where an imaginary orchestra's members can be pinpointed are essential. But *The Independent's* (fairly unscientific) listening test suggested that the new speakers could quickly replace the wooden boxes that have cluttered living room floors and bookcases

ever since hi-fi meant having more than a Dancette and a stack of records skewered above it. "True, it won't satisfy every hi-fi buff," said Mr Curtis. "But this is only the first generation. These are aimed at the average enthusiast. It doesn't give you that pin-point sound, but it offers a great "surround" sound, which is especially good for home cinema."

Other obvious applications include announcement systems

and loudspeakers for computers – both of which Wharfedale is already demonstrating.

The first prototypes, produced with the Defence Research Agency (DERA) in Farnborough, used materials such as carbon fibre and aircraft-quality aluminium which meant they cost about £800 each. But on discovering the soundboard principle, the team cut the costs so that parts for the new speakers cost just £5 each.

Wharfedale has licensed the technology from NXT, the company set up to develop the DERA discovery. Essentially, each speaker consists of a transducer which excites resonance in the air cells of a honeycomb matrix between the panels.

Mr Curtis said: "People are always criticising us in Britain for having great ideas but not getting them into production. Well, here's one which we have."

Women's £50,000 victory in RSI case

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

TENS of thousands of computer users throughout industry suffering from a particularly painful form of Repetitive Strain Injury stand to gain from a landmark judgment yesterday.

For the first time, the existence of "diffuse" RSI was recognised after a full legal hearing, contradicting a High Court ruling in 1993 which effectively declared that it was "all in the mind".

At the Mayor's and City of London Court, five former Midland bank workers, who suffered "considerable pain" in their arms, necks and shoulders, were awarded £50,000 in compensation. Judge Byrt said in his judgment that the bank had been in breach of its duty of care to its employees. While yesterday's ruling was at county court level and does not constitute a precedent, other hearings will find it difficult to ignore.

During the six-week case, which ended earlier this year, the five women said they had suffered a series of upper-limb disorders after they were ordered to increase their work rate. Judge Byrt said the employees, who were based at the Midland's processing centre at Frintley, Surrey, had been suffering from a combination of pressure of work and insufficient breaks from keyboards. The judge awarded them £7,000 each in general compensation and special compensation for loss of earnings. The Banking, Insurance and Finance Union, which backed the women's case, said the bank faced costs of £500,000.

A spokesman for the bank said that management was disappointed with the decision and was considering an appeal.

Fibre optics help in cancer

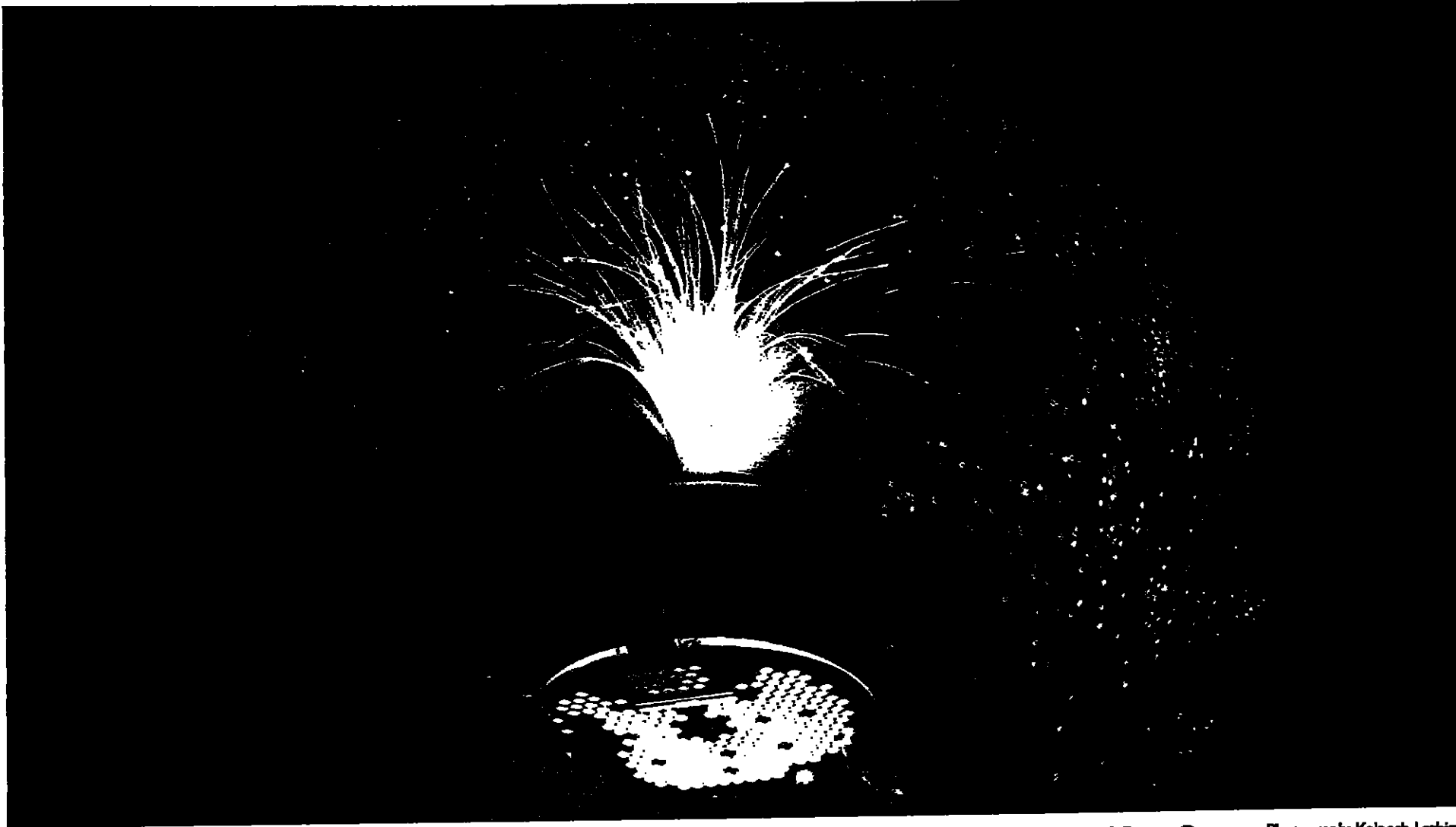
By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

A PROBE that can measure the exact amount of oxygen in a tumour helping to target treatment where it is needed is to be tested to see if it can improve the outcome in a range of cancers.

The fiberoptic probe, similar to a single strand of a fibre optic light, lights up when inserted into tissue containing oxygen. Oxygen levels are critical because they affect the way that cancer responds to chemotherapy and radiotherapy – the lower the level of oxygen the harder the tumour is to destroy.

Early research on the device, developed at the Cancer Research Campaign's Gray Laboratories in Northwood, Middlesex, shows that it is better than existing methods of assessing oxygen levels.

Dr Borivoj Vojnovic, the probe's inventor, said: "By knowing a tumour's oxygen levels, doctors can tailor chemotherapy and radiotherapy to individuals making their



Dr Vojnovic, inventor of the probe he believes will aid cancer treatment, demonstrating a fiberoptic lamp yesterday, on the eve of National Cancer Day

Photograph: Kalpesh Lathiga

treatment more effective. I am also convinced that there are countless other applications for the device, many of which we haven't yet thought of."

Scientists believe that the device, called the OxyLite system, has potential applications in

plastic surgery, the care of head injuries, shock monitoring and cardiology.

Professor Gordon McVie, director of the Cancer Research Campaign, said: "If the patient trials for the device are successful, I would hope that one

day a type of oxygen sensor will be routinely used in cancer treatment. By being able to customise treatment to individual patients it would mean more effective treatment for cancer patients and in some cases less side-effects."

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Thatcher hired by controversial investment fund

By Lisa Paterson

BARONESS Thatcher has been hired as an adviser to one of the world's largest investment firms, a hedge fund famed for its aggressive and confrontational business approach.

Ironically, it was hedge funds, companies which speculate in currency and share movements, which forced sterling out of the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) in 1992.

Tiger Management yesterday said it was "an honour" to have the former prime minister as a consultant, for an annual salary rumoured to lie between £250,000 and £750,000. Lady Thatcher has also made regular appearances on the lucrative international lecture circuit.



Lady Thatcher: Possible six-figure deal

former prime minister as a consultant, for an annual salary rumoured to lie between £250,000 and £750,000. Lady Thatcher has also made regular appearances on the lucrative international lecture circuit.

Tiger Management was founded in 1980, and at the time had total assets of just \$8m. Its phenomenal growth rate has made Mr Robertson, its founder, one of the US's wealthiest men. Back in 1996, Mr Robertson's annual salary was \$300m (£180m), according to *Financial World* magazine, making him Wall Street's second best-paid man. His rival Mr Soros was the highest-paid individual on Wall Street.

George Soros achieved notoriety back in 1992 when it emerged that he had earned more than \$1bn from betting that the pound would fall out of the ERM. More recently, Mr Soros hit the headlines again when it was rumoured that he had bet \$8bn that the pound would fall against the Deutschmark.

A spokesperson for Tiger Management declined to discuss whether his company was actively involved in forcing the pound from the ERM. The spokesperson added that Tiger primarily invested in company shares, although it did occasionally invest in commodities and currencies.

This is not the first controversial career move Baroness Thatcher has made since resigning as Prime Minister. Philip Morris, the US tobacco giant whose cigarette brands include Marlboro, has hired the

paid men on Wall Street, said: "The advisory board plays a vital part at Tiger and we are honoured to have Lady Thatcher as a member".

A spokesperson for the company said Lady Thatcher would be advising on "financial, political and economic issues". He said the former Tory leader was "one of the most respected individuals on the globe".

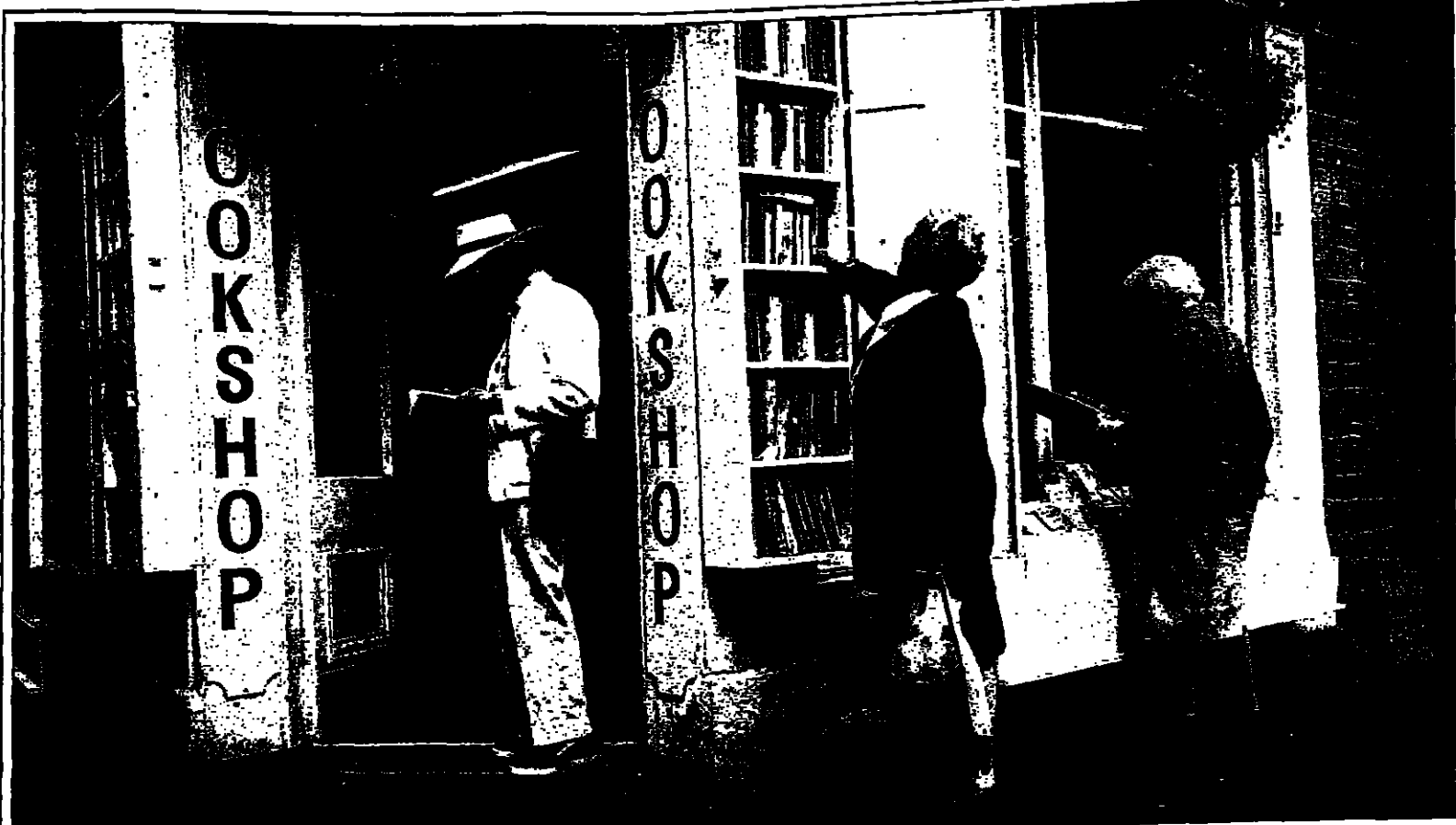
A spokesperson for Lady Thatcher said: "She has known the company for some years and, more recently, was asked whether she would join the advisory board". The spokesperson added that the board generally met between four and six times a year, and Lady Thatcher expected to attend her first meeting in July.

Tiger Management, with around \$18bn (£10.8bn) of total assets, is the world's second largest hedge fund. The largest hedge fund in the world is Soros Fund Management, headed by the controversial George Soros.

George Soros achieved notoriety back in 1992 when it emerged that he had earned more than \$1bn from betting that the pound would fall out of the ERM. More recently, Mr Soros hit the headlines again when it was rumoured that he had bet \$8bn that the pound would fall against the Deutschmark.

A spokesperson for Tiger Management declined to discuss whether his company was actively involved in forcing the pound from the ERM. The spokesperson added that Tiger primarily invested in company shares, although it did occasionally invest in commodities and currencies.

This is not the first controversial career move Baroness Thatcher has made since resigning as Prime Minister. Philip Morris, the US tobacco giant whose cigarette brands include Marlboro, has hired the



Visitors browsing among the bookshops in Hay-on-Wye, Powys, yesterday, at the start of the town's annual literary festival

Photograph: Rob Stratton

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Fly-on-wall didn't show full picture

By Janine Gibson
Media Correspondent

THE BBC is again facing potentially embarrassing revelations about one of its "fly-on-the-wall" documentary-soap hits.

Clampers, which has garnered around 7.5 million viewers with its tales of the day-to-day life of a beleaguered car clamping in south London, was revealed yesterday to have, at best, stretched reality.

A Southwark Council spokesman admitted that the show's star, Ray Brown, is an office-bound duty manager who is very seldom seen out clamping.

Mr Brown was shadowed for eight months by the BBC crew on the streets of south London. The impression given in the programme was that Mr Brown's stunts, such as singing the Queen hit "Another One Bites the Dust" while clamping a car, are everyday incidents.

But yesterday it emerged that after interviewing staff at the Airport Parking Corporation of America, which is sub-contracted by Southwark Council to manage car clamping, the BBC researchers felt Mr Brown was the, at best, television-friendly, despite his being supervisor rather than a clamping.

Mr Brown himself undermined the programme-makers when he told a press agency: "I haven't worked on the streets for the last two years," though yesterday he claimed in a BBC statement that those comments had been misinterpreted.

He is currently on leave from Southwark Council, avoiding the media glare, but a colleague said yesterday: "Ray is a bit of a mercurial character... His job has always involved some going out and clamping vehicles but he is largely office-

based. Though that doesn't make for very interesting television, I suppose."

The BBC issued a statement, saying: "The series was made with the full co-operation and support of Southwark Council, which has expressed its satisfaction with the portrayal of its work in the series as accurate and fair... Throughout the six-part series [Mr Brown] is seen performing a variety of duties both on the street and office-based."

Broadcasters and producers have been accused recently of blurring the line between fact and fiction in the fly-on-the-wall genre. The new breed of light entertainment-style documentary soap, while gathering huge numbers of viewers, has been all-but disowned by more serious documentary-makers.

The BBC was forced to admit that its breakthrough hit *Driving School* contained reconstructed footage, while Channel 4 apologised to viewers when it suffered the same problem with *Rogue Males*. Last week the BBC confirmed it was examining the guidelines it issued to producers to see if there were lessons to be learned.

Clampers was not produced by the same team as *Driving School*, which came from BBC Bristol. *Clampers* producer, Kim Duke, was adamant that her series was fair: "We don't want to misrepresent anything... We do extensive research before we start doing anything."

Through the build-up to the transmission of *Clampers*, Mr Brown himself has become something of a media celebrity, joining *Driving School*'s heroine Maureen Rees, who has also had rather more than her allotted 15 minutes of fame. Mr Brown is currently filming a new BBC game show called *A Date with Fate*.

Second-hand gets classy as rich join poor in search of a designer label bargain

By Glenda Cooper
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

JARVIS Cocker does it. So do Paul McCartney and Brian May. According to a new survey, Britain spends £5bn a year at charity shops, second-hand shops and car-boot sales.

Most of us will be out bargain hunting this weekend, when there will be an estimated 10,000 car-boot sales. A survey of 1,000 people commissioned by the second-hand retail chain Cash Converters found that bargain seekers made almost 145 million visits to car-boot sales last year - three visits per person spending on average £8.32 a time.

The idea of shopping for second-hand goods being confined to those less well off is a myth. While lower social groups visit car-boot sales three times as often as ABC1s, the survey also revealed that professional and managerial types are more likely to buy second-hand than they are to buy the *Financial Times*; more than half a million of them go to boot sales two to three times a year or more and spend £12.05 on average.

The single biggest attraction of these "alternative retail outlets" is the chance to pick up a bargain, with just under half citing this as the reason. Thrifty British shoppers were also at-

tracted by low prices (24 per cent) and value for money (18 per cent).

At the Oxfam shop in Marylebone, west London, yesterday, Angelica Letsch, who works for an independent record company, was trying on a lined kimono for £39.99. She said: "It's the low prices, it's the adventure. You never know what's going to be there and that's a great feeling. I've just got two beautiful wrought-iron candleholders for £2.99 and you can imagine what that would cost in Selfridges or Harrods. I think it's a really nice way of shopping."

June Doswell's greatest bargain was a silk dress that she had seen in Simpsons for £300 but picked up in a charity shop for £5. "I'm a clothesaholic but you have to have a budget. So what I'll do is buy a really good jacket and then come here to buy trousers to match or vice versa. I think it's a real English thing to get something for nothing."

Peter Holbrook, the manager of the branch, said that the image of charity shops being dusty and full of tat was outdated. "We get people popping into the Conran shop and then coming into us. We have a lot of very well-heeled customers."

The Marylebone shop has a large record collection and Mr Holbrook said that many disc jockeys came into



Angelica Letsch trying on a kimono in the Marylebone Road Oxfam shop - £39.99 and very stylish

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

to look for unusual records as well as pop stars such as Jarvis Cocker, Sir Paul McCartney and Brian May. "We've sold first-edition Rolling Stones albums and first-edition *Sergeant Peppers* for £150-£200. We also have a lot of books and sold a first edition *Catcher in the Rye* [the novel by JD Salinger]."

Michael Kew was delighted to find a recording of the Brandenburg Concertos by Otto Klemperer. "I come here because they have the best record selection that I know of. There's a very wide choice."

Ten minutes away, the Oxfam

branch in Edgware Road is a more conventional type of charity shop, Rosemary Hittinger was browsing: "I come here to buy my books because books are so expensive now," she said. "I think we're a nation of bargain hunters. I don't think it's altruism at all."

Angela Calavia was less convinced: "I don't usually come into charity shops because of the smell," she said. "They smell of that musty smell of death although this one doesn't. I always worry. I don't like wearing someone else's clothes."

Christine Carus-Wilson, dis-

agrees: "A large part of my wardrobe comes from charity shops. The cost is important now I'm retired and all women love a bargain. So as a result I've got a very interesting wardrobe. I do like to help Oxfam and Christian Aid. Also I think they're very useful if you've got young children - all that baby equipment is so expensive."

But the Cash Converters survey also highlighted a number of pitfalls peculiar to this retail sector - particularly car-boot sales. The prospect of unwittingly buying faulty or stolen goods alarmed one-quarter of shoppers. Nearly one in five were con-

cerned about the quality of goods purchased and the lack of a guarantee or after-sales protection.

"Many people are unaware of the lack of protection attached to buying goods from a car-boot sale," said Alan Street, chief executive of the Institute of Trading Standards. "Buying from a private individual very much reduces the consumer's rights in law... we all love a bargain but we would advise the public that if they want to protect their rights they should stick to reputable second-hand retailers who can guarantee their consumer rights, who should also abide by the law."

Half of Wendy houses unsafe

By Louise Jury

NEARLY half of children's Wendy houses examined by trading standards officers were unsafe, it was revealed yesterday.

Surrey trading standards said only 54 out of 96 playhouses examined were completely safe. Officers in areas including Herefordshire and Worcestershire found similar problems.

One manufacturer has already been successfully prosecuted in the wake of the investigation, launched in response to complaints from parents.

An investigation by Surrey trading standards officials found many playhouses contained splinters, sharp points, protruding nails, staples and screws.

Many had door and window hinges where small fingers could be caught and injured while some doors could not be opened from the inside. Some used glass in windows, carrying the risk of breakage and injury. Two were built on two levels and had gaps in the balustrade through which a child could fall or where a child could become trapped.

Jon Garden Buildings Ltd, of West Yorkshire, was ordered to pay £1,000 costs and conditionally discharged for two years for failing to meet the necessary safety standards.

Peter Denard, Surrey's trading standards officer, said: "If you're unsure of how to erect a playhouse, always seek the advice of a professional."

Phil Dart, head of policy for Surrey trading standards, said the problem appeared to be that many Wendy houses were made by garden shed manufacturers who did not know that they were classified as a toy. "With the kind of controls we now have with toy safety, it is very rare to find something that is wrong with something made in Britain."

Leading article, page 20

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A lost boy in America's killing fields

By Tim Cornwell
in Springfield, Oregon

"TO All Media," read a cardboard sign on the fence at Thurston High School, amid endless bouquets of flowers thrust in the wire, "We need to put the blame in its right spot... not all on Kip! Kip was an average middle-class boy and because he got angry you showed him how to become famous in 15 minutes. Your fault, no one else's!"

Nearby Amanda Nilsen, 17, talked passionately through her braces. "I think that the boy lost hope," she said. "I think he felt he had nothing to live for. People lose hope, they feel lost, they act in odd ways. We're teenagers, nobody ever listens to us. As soon as they start listening, this will stop."

Kipland P Kinkel, 15, was to appear in court charged with murder yesterday in the killing of two schoolmates and the wounding of nearly two dozen others in a bloody early morning rampage in his school cafeteria.

Mikael Nicolson, 17, engaged to be married, died at the scene; the death of a second teenager, initially on life support was confirmed yesterday.

Prosecutors said they would seek to try Kinkel as an adult, though Oregon does not have the death penalty. Kinkel was also presumed to have shot dead his parents, William and Faith Kinkel, both teachers in their late 50s found dead at the family home. The only family survivor was his older sister, Christin, a former Thurston cheerleader studying at a college in Hawaii.

A small and eminently solid American city groped for an explanation yesterday to the latest spree shooting by a US schoolboy, and could not find one. The answer that sprang to mind - gun control - was hard to reconcile in a place where most families have guns at home, and schools traditionally close for a day when the deer season opens.

"You look at our kids, and you know they've got deer rifles, they've always had them," said Ginny Lauritsen, a Sunday school teacher at Thurston. "Of course kids know how to shoot," she added, but said in her day they didn't carry semi-automatic weapons.

Kinkel entered the cafeteria in a dark trench coat and hat, carrying two pistols with ammunition reportedly spilling from his pockets, but picked off most victims with a .22 rifle.

For years now, when commentators have talked of a chilling loss of remorse in

American teenagers, they have meant the gang killers in the cities, the drive-by shootings and drug turf wars where the faces were almost inevitably black.

But since the killings moved to the schools, shooters and victims have mostly been white and rural. In the last six months, they have taken on the appearance of a national phenomenon.

The depths of Kip Kinkel's rage had yet to be plumbed yesterday. But whether he was psychologically imbalanced or badly brought up, his actions spoke of an anger that he could not control. He was said to have been voted by his contemporaries as "The person most likely to start a Third World War".



Kipland P Kinkel's school year-book photograph

Amid calls for everything from peer counselling to metal detectors, there was a good deal of finger pointing yesterday at the media, and "violence" in general.

One Boy Scouts of America official described how he had gone home and switched channels from the shooting coverage to find "Hard Copy", a tabloid news show, broadcasting graphic pictures of someone shot in a drug deal.

"There's too much violence everywhere. People don't have respect for parents or anybody. There's no thankfulness: it seems like we've lost that," said Josh Taylor, 18, who was in the cafeteria.

The last major school shootings were in March, in Arkansas, when an 11-year-old boy and his 13-year-old friend killed four students and a teacher. It followed others in

West Padukah, Kentucky and earlier in Pearle, Mississippi where a boy shot his mother and nine students.

But people in Springfield yesterday angrily rejected any "redneck" label, and were not above pointing out that they lived in the new West, not the old South. Oregon is a state that has a liberal political culture, with green belts and legal euthanasia, where the forested green hills and pastoral coastline are a favourite retreat for wealthy Californians.

But the National Rifle Association is still a potent force: in a supreme irony, a local legislator who successfully sponsored a law making it a crime to bring a gun to school was targeted by the NRA and defeated in Tuesday's primary.

Springfield, a city of 45,000 was mostly a logging community until the mills closed ten years ago, but it has diversified since then, with Sony establishing a plant. Unemployment, locals say, is about as low as it can be.

The Thurston teenagers were certainly sophisticated and well-spoken. One, a boy scout on the wrestling team, had the old-fashioned courage to tackle Kinkel and continue to struggle with him after being shot in the chest.

It was a surreal experience to hear others describing scenes of graphic horror. "I thought it was a joke," recounted Emily Olson, 17, surrounded by giggling girlfriends. "Then he went up to this kid and shot him right in the head in front of me."

Kip Kinkel, like Timothy McVeigh, liked to make bombs. Obsessed with guns and explosives, he was caught with a pipe bomb in his locker, and school rumour had it - well before the shooting - that he had once blown up a cow. He hid guns under his bed at home, it was reported.

Classmates said he could be sweet and funny, but also showed signs of an explosive temper, picking fights without cause, stopped for throwing rocks off a freeway bridge. He had been in an anger management programme, contemporaries said.

He bragged of torturing animals, and "he said it would be pretty cool to kill someone", said Brian Austin, 14, a classmate. Arrested at school the day before with a gun, he was released to the custody of his parents, facing expulsion, in a decision denounced yesterday as crazy by some locals, but defended as routine by police. He reportedly threatened revenge, and on the school bus next day boasted he was going to "do something stupid".



The gun holds a special place in American culture - but at what price?

6,000 expelled for taking guns to school

The raw figures are terrifying enough. More than 6,000 American children were expelled last year for bringing guns or explosives to school, and 10 per cent of schools reported serious violent crimes. In Britain in 1995, 19 children under 19 died as a result of gunshot wounds. In Canada, it was 153; in Japan, none. In the US, the figure was 5,285.

But what is still more terrifying is that following the school deaths in Oregon, just as after the shootings in Jonesboro, Arkansas and all the others, the warnings and the demands for action will go unheard. "We have a very serious problem. It's an epidemic of gun violence in America's schools and we have to do the responsible thing," says Bob Walker, of Handgun Control Inc, a lobby group that is fighting to limit the ownership of small arms. "Every American has a responsibility to keep guns out of the hands of children," he told CNN on Thursday night.

Yet when the President made a speech yesterday, what was the great threat he identified? Biological weapons. The US is to increase its stocks of antidotes to anthrax and so on; the menace of guns will continue.

Everyone knows a Kip Kinkel at school - weird, maladjusted, a bit dangerous. He was voted the child "most likely to start World War III" by his classmates. One said that "he would, like, torture animals and stuff, and tell us about it." But in Britain, the worst those kids can do is small beer indeed. They can't get hold of a semi-automatic rifle and spray their classmates with bullets.

In the US, the Constitution - written 200 years ago, when America was a frontier society, when guns meant single-shot muzzle loaders - protects the right to bear arms. And a significant part of American mythology is based around that right, the need to get mad and to get even through the great equaliser.

When a poll for CNN asked Americans who they blamed for tragedies like that in Oregon, 28 per cent blamed the parents. Mr and Mrs Kinkel, it seems, were the first casualties of their son's black, irrepressible fury early on Thursday morning in the district they called Shangri La. Then he put on his coat and headed out with a rifle under his arm and a pistol in his holster, with the US Constitution right behind him.

— Andrew Marshall, Washington

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No home for Israel's Arabs

By Patrick Cockburn
in Jerusalem

THE first time Sonia Khoury's apartment was attacked, men threw blazing petrol-soaked rags at her door. "My sister and I were sitting in my room at two o'clock in the morning when we heard knocking at the door. When we looked out we saw flames and smoke coming through the sides of the door."

It was the first of three fire-bomb attacks since Ms Khoury, 26, receptionist at the Hilton in Jerusalem, rented a flat in a Jewish neighbourhood of the city a year ago. She is an Israeli citizen and fluent in Hebrew, but also an Israeli-Arab, Israel's largest minority, and it is unheard of for an Arab to move to Jewish west Jerusalem.

Ms Khoury's new neighbours made clear what they thought of an Arab living among them. They asked the landlord to evict her, with her younger sister Wafa and their friend Manal Diab. Ms Khoury says that in her block "only one Israeli man supported us and said he did not mind Arabs living in the building."

What happened next shows the antagonism of many Israelis towards the 850,000 Israeli-Arabs. It confirms a survey which showed 40 per cent of Israeli youth say they actively hate Arabs and of these 60 per cent "want revenge".

The first sign was the word *nevela* scrawled on the apartment door. In biblical Hebrew it means a "rotting carcass".

Use of this archaic word may also imply that those behind the fire bombings had a religious nationalist or ultra-orthodox background. The first attack, which blackened the ceiling just inside the door, was in October. The women asked for police protection, which was refused. The second attack was in December. Ms

Khoury says: "They put bottles like those used in hair spray outside the door." The package exploded when a bomb-disposal officer tried to defuse it. He was saved from injury by his protective clothing.

Ms Khoury says: "We wanted to move but we could not find a flat. I couldn't sleep afterwards." The attack also brought publicity and a visit by Ehud Olmert, the right-wing Mayor of Jerusalem. He said they were in the same position as Jewish settlers at Ras al-Amoud, a Palestinian district of the city. Ms Khoury says: "We told him ... we did not come to this apartment and say it was ours, like the settlers. We rented it."

Mr Olmert said the municipality would help repair the flat, but nothing happened for five months. The women also found they could not claim compensation as "victims of terrorism" because the attacks were not deemed to be against Israel.

Police installed a video camera but no progress was made tracing the attackers. The women live near Mea Shearim, an ultra-orthodox neighbourhood, but the street is a mixture of ultra-orthodox, religious and secular Jews. Nevertheless, when the women walked past a nearby religious college, the boys shouted: "Arabs, go to Gaza; go to Jordan."

The final attack was on Israeli Independence Day, 30 April, when Ms Khoury was at work. Somebody placed what she described as a pipe bomb by the door; it exploded at 10.30pm when Wafa Khoury and Ms Diab were at home. The women, with nowhere else to live, asked the landlord to renew the one-year rental agreement, but he refused. Their neighbours were now more sympathetic, but said: "Our children are frightened."

Ms Khoury, a Christian, was

born in Nazareth, the daughter of a driver for the Israeli bus company Egged. She says she grew up not thinking of herself as an Israeli but not as a Palestinian either. Her experiences since coming to Jerusalem have changed that. "I knew there was racism here, but I didn't expect them to bomb my flat."

The attacks confirm the conclusions of a survey last year of the views on Israeli-Arabs of 5,318 Israeli pupils at 84 schools carried out by Ofra Maizels, of Haifa University, and Reuven Gal, from the Carmel Institute of Social Research. They found not only that 40 per cent said they hated Arabs but that among those who live in poorer towns, students at religious colleges and children of parents who came originally from the Middle East, three-quarters expressed hatred.

Less animosity was expressed by students from kibbutzim, but even there 32 per cent said they hated Arabs.

The Oslo accords of 1993, purportedly offering a resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, made no difference to attitudes. It is also ominous that Israelis expressing greatest dislike for Arabs come from constituencies which vote overwhelmingly for the present Israeli government. It is their views which will count most in determining government policy.

To their surprise, the Khoury sisters and Ms Diab have found a new apartment, also in a Jewish district of Jerusalem.

Ms Khoury says that for the first time when she rang up a prospective landlord and said "I'm an Arab", he replied: "I don't care." As the women prepare to leave, a municipal workman sent by Mr Olmert has finally arrived to repaint the blackened doorway and ceiling of their apartment.



Sonia Khoury at the door of her fire-bombed Jerusalem flat Photograph: Bryan McBurney

Lebanon's new beginning held back by history

Robert Fisk in Beirut charts the crazy voting patterns of tomorrow's elections

PLUS ça change, plus c'est la même chose. So, welcome to the Lebanese municipal elections, the poll that will, supposedly, transfuse fresh blood—a phrase to be treated with great care here—into the political system as 200,000 Lebanese vote tomorrow for 7,662 council seats and 2,041 "mukhtars" (village leaders).

The only problem is that every town and hamlet in Lebanon, save for 21 (of which more later), will have to elect a Muslim-Christian council in exactly the same proportion to the old retainers originally chosen 35 years ago.

For such is the infatuation and fear of the sectarian system in Lebanon that no Christian can replace a Muslim, or Muslim replace a Christian, as mayor, mukhtar or majority council member.

The proportion of Christians to Muslims in each town council must remain the same as it was at the last municipal elections in 1963; and so the skeletons of Lebanon's pre-1975-90 civil war social life will continue to dominate the land.

Take Abdul Rahman Skafi, for example, a Sunni Muslim mukhtar from the Sidon area who claims to be 107. Sidon is a Sunni town and will, indeed must, elect a Sunni mayor. Mr Skafi, who remained mukhtar of one rural district for 40 years while the government automatically re-appointed him through the 16 years of civil war, believes he has grown too old for the job. So say all of us. But he's supporting his son Ahmed, to replace him. And Ahmed is almost 60.

Worse still, voters must cast their ballots in the town of

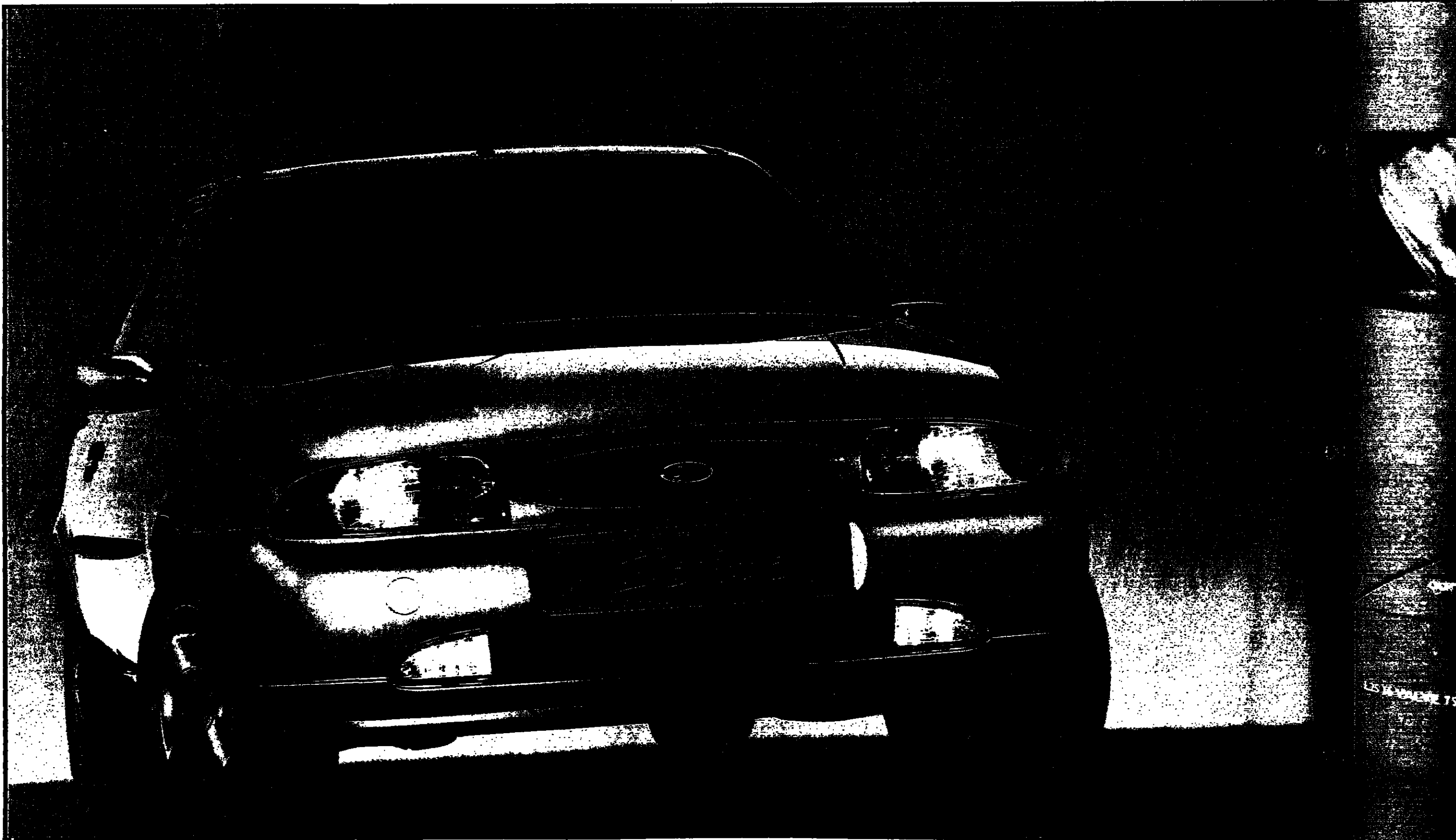
their birth. Thus in the 400,000 strong Christian city of Jounieh only about 20,000 citizens are eligible to vote.

A Lebanese Catholic friend born in Mashgara must vote in his eastern Bekaa valley town, where Christians were 50 per cent of the population before the war. Now they are 5 per cent. Hizbollah guerrillas (Shia Muslim) dominate the town; so it's one of the 21 villages, along with the entire Israeli-occupied zone of Lebanon, exempted from the poll, whose councils will be reappointed by the government with the old 1963 potentates in charge.

Odd things have happened, though. The fiercely anti-Hizbollah, multi-millionaire prime minister, Rafiq Hariri, was flirting with the Hizbollah for a joint list last week against his rival Nabih Berri, the speaker of parliament. Now Messrs Hariri and Berri are talking about an alliance. High in the Chouf mountains, where Druze and Christians were slicing each other's throats in 1983, Druze leader Walid Jumblatt and Christian Maronite leader Dory Chamoun are making common cause to defeat independents and right-wing Christians. The exiled ex-General Michel Aoun (leader of a failed anti-Syrian "independence" war and current place of abode France) is backing a Sunni Muslim lady to support his cause in Lebanon.

Be sure that the results will make no difference. Be sure that enemies and friends will exchange places.

As that great Lebanese poet Khalil Gibran once wrote: "Pity the Nation divided into fragments, each fragment deeming itself a nation."



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new
held
story

Clashes tested Indonesian army's patience

By Richard Lloyd Parry and
Stephen Vines in Jakarta

HOURS before last night's confrontation between the Indonesian army and students started, there was a worrying portent of trouble to come, as thousands of Islamic supporters of Indonesia's President Habibie threw stones and scuffled with demonstrating students in Jakarta.

The incident occurred at the parliament building where students have rallied all week demanding reforms and a change of government. After the resignation of President Suharto on Thursday, they began to call for the head of his successor and former vice-president, BJ Habibie. "Habibie will be the second great disaster", read a giant banner draped across the main parliament building.

The banner was a target for some 5,000 Habibie supporters who burst into the parliamentary compound early yesterday, shouting "God is Great" in Arabic and rhythmically chanting Mr Habibie's name. After the crowd burst into the square where the students were peacefully listening to speeches, there was a dangerous standoff which threatened to develop into a violent confrontation as the Muslim protesters tore down banners criticising the new president.

Student leaders pleaded with their followers not to be provoked. "We are one commando", they shouted in response to the Muslim chants; they like to describe themselves as a united commando group, fighting to bring democracy to Indonesia.



Muslim women, wearing headbands proclaiming support for new President Habibie, at the mosque inside Jakarta's parliament complex yesterday. Photograph: AFP

The Muslims claimed to be students but many of them were clearly not from college. Leaders denied they had been mobilised by Mr Habibie, but admitted he knew about the demonstration in advance.

It appeared some careful organisation had gone into the protest be-

cause the demonstrators came with professionally printed banners and head bands which helped to distinguish them from the students.

The restraint of the students defused the situation, though a second group of Muslim protesters arrived after the first had left. This smaller group were separated from the stu-

dents by soldiers who had not intervened when the first group arrived.

For much of 32 years in power Suharto was able to balance the interests of the Muslim majority, who make up 90 per cent of Indonesia's population, with those of minority races and religions. Although he is a practising Muslim, Suharto's style of

leadership owed as much to that of the traditional Javanese kings, as to the precepts of Islam. It was only very late in life, for instance, that he made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Mr Habibie, however, is seen as a much more committed Muslim, and yesterday's incident suggests he may yet become a focus of fundamentalist agitation.

"For 30 years Muslims had nothing under the New Order, and all the money went to Chinese and Christians," said Darwin Agus, of the Islamic Youth of Indonesia, one of the groups demonstrating in the new President's support. "Habibie is a good start in preparing for the next step, government by the Koran."

The naming of a new cabinet has done little to increase confidence in Mr Habibie whom many in Jakarta see as an interim leader filling the gap between Suharto and a likely successor drawn from the ranks of the military.

The two most blatant examples of favouritism from Suharto's last cabinet have been sacked: the fallen president's eldest daughter, Siti Hardijanti Rukmana, who was in charge of welfare, and Bob Hasan, his golfing partner and trade minister. But half of the new cabinet is made up of old ministers.

"I am neither endorsing nor opposing the cabinet," said Amien Rais, the country's Muslim opposition leader. "The cabinet has a lot of technocrats in it but some of the names still reflect old ways."

General Wiranto, chief of the armed forces and one of the most powerful candidates to succeed Mr Habibie, stayed on as defence minister. Yesterday, in a statement that can now be seen as an oblique warning about the events that were to take place last night, he said student demonstrations would not be tolerated indefinitely. "I expect the students to end their mass actions and go back to their campuses to study," he said.

Idealism expires as a Communist becomes Russia's rights monitor

By Phil Reeves
in Moscow

IN A MOVE which symbolises the loss of the idealism that held sway in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse, Russia's parliament yesterday elected a senior member of the Communist Party to be the nation's human-rights commissioner.

The decision, part of a trade-off over jobs between parties, infuriated Sergei Kovalyov, the previous incumbent, a former dissident considered Russia's successor to Andrei Sakharov.

Mr Kovalyov, the country's best-known rights activist, who spent years in a Soviet prison camp for his activities, called the appointment of Oleg Mironov

a "foregone conclusion". He told the State Duma, or lower house, before being shouted down: "The shameless deal leading a Communist to this position is monstrous."

Rights groups, which blame the Communist Party for trampling individual rights during decades of repression, are certain to argue that the job of

commissioner, though vague (and lamentably under-funded) is needed, and should not be a mere chip in a political bartering process. The concept of human rights is still in its infancy in Russia. The 1993 constitution, which affords citizens considerable protection, is ignored at grassroots level and by the government. Abuses of individuals

by the legal system and the authorities - notably the police, who beat up prisoners and target ethnic minorities - are still widespread.

Such is the relative novelty of a rights commissioner that the role has yet to be fully defined, though he has the power to launch legal appeals for those who believe their rights

have been violated. He can also issue annual reports. The appointment of Mr Mironov, 59, a former law professor who is a member of the Communist Party Central Committee, ended two years of tawdry bargaining between parties over who should have the job.

In the end, the Communists appear to have been given it in

return for giving the pro-government party "Our Home is Russia" chairmanship of the parliamentary defence committee. Mr Mironov is now expected to quit the party. Among the 11 candidates were Mr Kovalyov, fired from the commissioner's post in 1995 after mounting a campaign excoriating President Boris Yeltsin for

the Chechen war but not before confirming his reputation as a courageous, fiery defender of rights. Another contender was the former justice minister Valentin Kovalyov, who was fired after publication of photographs which appeared to show him frolicking in a steam bath with two naked women, neither of whom was his wife.



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France discovers art on the DJs' turntables

By John Lichfield
in Paris

WHEN is a DJ an artist? The answer is when he is French and when he – artistically – plays more than one record at a time. The French music producers' federation has declared that some disc jockeys should be considered creators of music who have the right to claim a small part of the royalties of the records they play.

The decision, seven months old, has caused consternation among music publishers in France and elsewhere. It points to a startling phenomenon: France, the butt of rock-music gibes, is leading the way in the hottest variants of pop music such as techno and house. Both are associated with clubs where star DJs create their own musical sounds by playing two or



In the groove – but is it art?

three records simultaneously.

The Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs et Editeurs de Musique (Sacem), which polices music royalties in France, decided last year that such DJs had crossed the line from mere presenters and selectors of records to creators of new musical forms. It decided that approved DJs – 60 have qualified – should receive one twelfth of royalties of records they "mix". The argument is that such a DJ is no longer just a compère, or even

a performer but an "ephemeral" or "instant" composer. Sacem collected £12m in royalties from 3,000 French dance clubs last year; this year, the first full year of its new ruling on royalties, £1m will go to disc jockeys.

The French trade association of music publishers has challenged the ruling, saying techno and house DJs are infringing the rights of the original composers. Star DJ-composers also exist in Britain and other European countries but some French DJs have become enormously successful and popular abroad – almost the first French pop musicians to break out of the national ghetto.

DJ Jack de Marseille, Laurent Garnier, Dimitri from Paris and others are in high demand in clubs throughout Europe. "At any other moment in the history

of pop," *Rolling Stone* magazine wrote recently, the words "Made in France" on a disc were "commercial suicide".

The DJs have no trouble accepting themselves as artists. DJ Jack performs two or three times a week in different European cities and issues albums of his live compositions. He argues that, by taking different records and merging them, he is creating a "new emotion ... a different feeling".

The Musicians' Union in Britain agrees. It is making a determined effort to recruit the new generation of DJs to its ranks. "Once you recognise them as musicians," said Tristan Evans, the union's spokesman, "you see that they're manipulating their turntables the way guitarists do with guitars". But does that make them composers?



Savita (left) and Deepika listening to a speech by the newly elected president of the All India Eunuchs Association at a conference yesterday in Bombay attended by 500 of the port's 12,000 eunuchs
Photograph: Sebastian d'Souza

IN BRIEF

Row grows on leaky N-trains

GERMANY'S Environment Minister, Angela Merkel, was under pressure to resign after admitting trains carrying nuclear waste to Britain and France had been leaking radiation for a decade. French regulators measured radiation 3,000 times the permitted level on the trains. On Thursday Ms Merkel suspended the transport of nuclear material by train; she says she was first informed of the leaks on 24 April. Germany has no reprocessing facilities, so its waste is hauled to Britain and France.

— Imre Karacs, Bonn

Old Dutch

DUTCH royals and windmill-keepers have launched a fund-raising project to preserve one of the most distinctive parts of the Netherlands' heritage. In their heyday in the mid-1800s, up to 10,000 windmills dotted the country, while only about 1,100 remain today.

— AP, Amsterdam

Unkind cut

A WOMAN who suspected her husband of sexually abusing their daughter cut off his penis with a kitchen knife while he slept and flushed it down the toilet. Doctors could not find the penis of Fidel Flores, a 38-year-old taxi-driver, and could only seal the wound, police said.

— AP, Lima, Peru

Just the ticket

FRANK and Shirley Capaci were celebrating after paying a barman \$5 (£3) for a chance of winning the largest US lottery jackpot. Although officials had to confirm it, the Capacis said they held the winning Powerball ticket, worth \$104.3m.

— AP, Streamwood, Illinois

Doctors use robots to aid heart surgery

By John Lichfield

A FRENCH medical team has conducted the first remote-control, open-heart surgery, using robots and computers developed by an American company.

The six operations, successfully performed this month at the Broussais hospital in Paris, may constitute a breakthrough in cardiac surgery as significant as the first heart transplant in 1967 and the first open-heart operations in 1956.

In the long run, the techniques should permit the development of new forms of heart surgery too minute and complicated to be performed by the human hand. Within five or 10 years, further developments in telecommunications may allow the most skilled surgeons to perform emergency surgery on patients hundreds, or even thousands of miles away.

The experimental operations were conducted by an internationally-renowned French team led by Professor Alain Carpentier. Although the technology was developed by an American company, Intuitive Surgical from Stanford in northern California, US federal regulations do not yet permit remote-control cardiac surgery on human beings.

Professor Carpentier said the six pioneer operations – relatively straightforward forms of heart surgery such as coronary by-passes and repairs to congenital faults – had been a "total success". A tiny camera and probes with micro-instruments were introduced into the heart through up to three incisions in

the chest, between one and four centimetres wide.

The professor, sitting in front of a video screen three metres away, manipulated the micro-instruments attached to robot arms, which are capable of responding instantly and with extreme precision to the surgeon's commands.

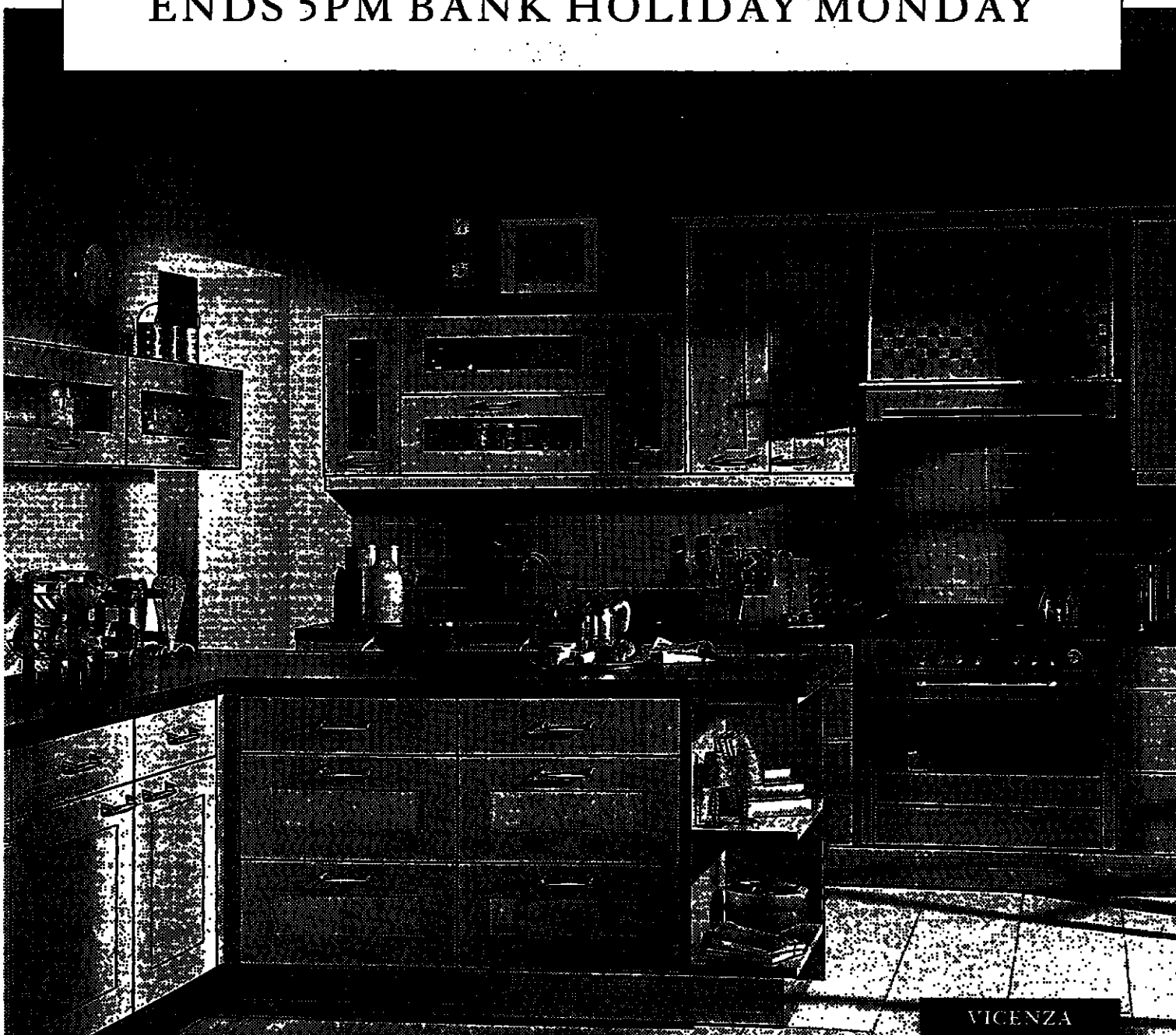
"The surgeon really feels he is sitting in the middle of the patient's heart," Professor Carpentier said. "He has greater precision and a better view." The next step, he said, would be to attempt operations which would be "very difficult or impossible" using the human hand and traditional instruments.

Operations conducted by a surgeon many miles away would not be possible with existing telecommunications technology. Even at a distance of 100 miles, there would be a potentially disastrous delay of up to one second before the robot arms responded to the surgeon's commands. The company which developed the technology believes, however, that within five years developments in communications technology will allow commands to be transmitted instantly over long distances.

This would allow eminent surgeons to conduct operations on patients thousands of miles away. The company believes that robotic heart surgery may become the norm, even for routine operations. The new technique avoids a large incision in the chest, and allows more precise surgery. Patients are less exposed to infection and should recover more rapidly.

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'Born again' Charlie Sheen suffers drug overdose

By David Usborne
in New York

ONLY a year after declaring that he was shedding his bad-boy lifestyle and had found religion, actor Charlie Sheen was yesterday recovering in a Los Angeles hospital from a reported drug overdose.

Sheen, the star of *Platoon*, *Wall Street* and the son of Hollywood veteran Martin Sheen, was admitted to the Los Robles Medical Center in the early hours of Wednesday, complaining he had difficulty walking and was experiencing tingling in his hands. Some reports suggested he arrived at Emergency in a state of hysteria and had to be tied down.

A visibly distraught elder Sheen arrived at the hospital late Thursday to quash reports being broadcast in Los Angeles that his son had suffered a stroke or had died.

"The first thing I want to assure you is that my son, Charlie Sheen, is very much alive," Mr Sheen said. "He's eating, he's talking, he's aware."



Charlie Sheen: Admitted to a Los Angeles hospital

No details were available on what kind of drug Sheen had taken. Three years ago, he told the *New York Post* of his battle with ecstasy. He said: "Ecstasy should be called the drug from Hell – because that's where it leaves you."

Mr Sheen has suffered repeated bouts of bad publicity, dating back to 1990 when he checked himself into a drug and alcohol rehabilitation clinic. In 1995 he was sued by a woman who claimed he struck her around the head after she refused to have sex with him.

Most humiliating, perhaps, was his leading role in the 1995 federal trial of Hollywood madam Heidi Fleiss, purveyor of prostitutes to the stars. He admitted he had ordered at least 27 call girls from Fleiss and had run up bills with her totalling \$50,000.

At the end of 1996, after ending a six-month marriage to model Donna Pele, Sheen announced he was becoming a born-again Christian. Fast living, he said then, "was a lot of fun, but there is such a thing as too much fun".

Martin Sheen said he was hopeful he would be able to persuade his son to re-enter a rehabilitation programme after his recovery from the latest scare.

He recalled how his actor friend Carroll O'Connor had been devastated when his son killed himself in March 1995 after struggling for years to defeat a cocaine addiction. "I'm sorry Carroll didn't get the chance that we have. This is not an easy moment in our lives, but it's a necessary one. Our hope is that he will accept recovery and be fine."

كلنا من الالاص

Some children still live in villages with their parents' killers, because there is too little evidence against them, or the children are too terrified to tell.

To leave Gigagata you must confess your crimes and appear to understand their gravity. There are no hard-faced thugs here, only kids in cut-off jeans and faded, torn American T-shirts who try to cage a cigarette or a Biro. But they have slaughtered and raped. Many specialised in ferreting out victims hiding from the mob. Among

Photograph: Didier Ruef/Networ

"They admit they killed," he says. "They were used particularly to kill other children. They say their fathers told them to. If they asked why they had to kill neighbours their fathers said the government had issued orders."

Until last year the boys of Gitagata were also held in adult jails where human-rights groups condemn the conditions as "appalling". Mr Rudasingwa

are locked up at night, by day the compound gate is open and they mix with local children. That is a minor triumph considering the initial hostility of locals.

her face. His father is bound and covered in crimson cuts. The knife held by the killer is grotesquely exaggerated in size and dominates the page.

800,000 people almost every child witnessed violence; much of it unbelievably brutal. Some children saw their pregnant mothers sliced open and the

per cent believed they would also die while 50 per cent witnessed massacres and 35 per cent saw other children kill or injure. The horror continues.

mother forced her to leave school. International aid is drying up in Rwanda now that the "emergency" is over. Try telling that to Rwanda's children.

Three notebooks filled with dated entries were found near Pol Pot's hilltop home close to



Pol Pot had \$54m (£33m)

They were plotting to betray

had little respect for their allies.

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Auntie shows her bloomers

Can it be true? The BBC has funded a new drama series which sends up the lunatic goings-on behind its own closed doors? By James Rampton

AT A MEETING in Broadcasting House, the Controller of BBC Radio 4 marvels at the proliferation of new managers in his network. "Well done," enthuses the Controller of Radio 2. "The more people you have doing the job you used to be able to do on your own, the better you're doing. Management is what the BBC does nowadays. Surely you know that... If the director-general makes the BBC any more efficient, it'll disappear. Think how much licence-payers' money he could save if we just stopped doing programmes altogether."

This delicious scene comes from *In the Red*, a new comic three-part murder mystery which portrays a BBC ruled by ruthless efficiency-drives and incomprehensible management-speak. The two controllers – played with evident relish by Stephen Fry and John Bird – go on to plot the downfall of a philistine director-general whose sole concern is money.

But who is making this seditious drama? Surely, it's a new offering from Sky, owned by that arch-critic of the BBC, Rupert Murdoch? Or perhaps it has been produced by ITV, constantly battling with the BBC for ratings supremacy? Er, no. This mischievous new piece of BBC-bashing is actually being made by the BBC. Talk about a public act of self-immolation.

John Bird – no, not Bird – applauds the BBC for making the series, which has been adapted by Malcolm Bradbury from Mark Taverer's novel. "You spend all the time saying what an awful place the BBC is, but the BBC is the only channel in the world that would make something about how appalling it is. It's also the only place where it would matter; if you said how appalling HTV was, nobody would care."

Taverer, who himself had a stint working at the BBC, also commends the corporation's bravery. "It is a great reflection of maturity on the part of the BBC that they are prepared to send themselves up on their own network. Can you imagine Sky commissioning 'Rupert Murdoch, You Pillock'?"

Mature or not, there is a suspicion that the BBC will forever use this as a force-field against criticism, a sort of "Get Out Of Jail Free" card. By getting their own retaliation in first, they hope that other more vicious critics won't be so swift to put the boot in. Are you watching, the *Daily Mail*?

Yet, for John Sessions, who plays the

part of Hercules Fortescue, a pathetically prickly BBC personnel officer, the fact that the BBC are making *In the Red* "is like the emperor walking through a crowd with a man whispering in his ear that he's human or hitting him with bladders. It's the hallmark of a healthy democracy. You always need a bit of *Splinter Image* in society."

The series captures the sense that politicking often seems more important than programme-making at the BBC. "I've always had the impression that 'Television Centre is like a Renaissance court,'" says Bird. "There is this feeling that the executives are cardinals in a Jacobean tragedy waiting to poison each other. There is the First Murderer and the Second Murderer. That carries over into this series."

"Then there's all this management-speak. They now have directorates – I thought only the KGB had directorates. It's amazing, just like John Le Carré. There's this absurd thing of BBC departments having to buy Q-Tips and studio-time from each other. They used to say that in Russia, nobody knew what anything cost. At the BBC that's all they know. The message the series ends with is that the lunatics should be put back in charge of the asylum – which is a good idea. It should be run not by the people who talk Harvard Business School-speak, but by the lunatics, the people who make programmes."

As you might expect, all this has ruffled a few Armani-clad feathers in the higher echelons of the BBC coop. "There have been requests for scripts from senior BBC sources," Sarah Smith, the series producer, says coyly, "and there was a flurry of phone calls about the director-general character."

Disquiet within the corporation was only heightened when it emerged who had been cast as the director-general: Michael Wearing, the maverick former head of drama serials who left the BBC after some none-too-flattering comments about the way the organisation was being run. "We auditioned a lot of people for that part," Smith explains, "but it was hard to find someone who has the right gravitas. When Michael accepted the part, he said, 'I approve of anything that gives the BBC a sense of humour.' After initial concern at the BBC about the casting, they decided they should take it as a joke. It would have been far worse PR to ask us to re-shoot the



Warren Clarke as the hero, George Cragge (above), an unreconstructed, old-school BBC crime reporter who is losing the battle against the forces of red tape

director-general scenes having already spent all that money on them."

Sessions trusts that the BBC will be able to see the funny side. "In the Soviet Union, if they didn't like what somebody said, they'd send them to the salt mines. I sincerely hope John Bird doesn't react in the same way. Can you imagine the headline? 'Richard Wilson [who plays the chairman of the BBC Board of Governors] vanishes – he's having to work for Grampian and teach Scottish country dancing in the Cairngorms.'"

Smith also believes the BBC should be big enough for a bit of internal mick-taking. "I'd be much more worried about the BBC if no one there had commissioned this. I would have been very sad if I'd had to take the project to Channel 4 – that would have been almost the end of the BBC as far as I'm concerned. It would have been far worse PR to turn it down than to make it. At the end of the day, it's only jokes. If the BBC aren't strong enough to take jokes, then the world is in a parlous state."

In the series, the BBC is merely a paradigm of the way huge corporations are in-

creasingly in the grip of bureaucracy. "I'd put the BBC together with any large organisation – the NHS, or the education service – in the way that it has undergone what I call a 'managementisation' process," Smith says. "Everybody will recognise it. The series has a go at that culture. The hero, George Cragge, is a bloke

creative people feel crushed by them. Whether it's in a university, a school or a hospital, management-speak is very much in play and accountants and bottom-liners have the upper hand."

One such is Fortescue. "He's a deeply sad and anal man," Sessions says. "He's got his PhD in Physics from Bangor and now

Cragge (played by Warren Clarke), an unreconstructed, old-school BBC crime reporter, whose idea of news-gathering is 10 pints of Guinness and a chicken vindaloo with a contact. He rails against the new ultra-efficient BBC news-room "where the average age is 11 and you have to go and stand in the middle of Oxford Circus to have a fag."

"We came up against this ridiculous situation when we were filming in Broadcasting House," Clarke chuckles. "We'd just finished a scene where the John Sessions character tells me to stub out a cigarette, when a real BBC commissioner shouted at us: 'Oi, this is a non-smoking building. Put that out.'"

Fry had a similar experience. "A BBC executive came onto the set and said: 'What are you chattering up Broadcasting House for?'" "I'm sorry," I replied, "we're making a programme." "I'm just going to a meeting to stamp out this sort of nuisance," he said. He had clipboards under his arm, and I dare say a few flow-charts, too."

'In the Red' starts on BBC2 on Tuesday.

Who is making this seditious drama? Surely, it's a new offering from Sky, owned by that arch-critic of the BBC, Rupert Murdoch

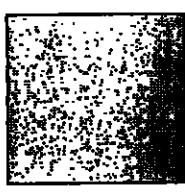
who thinks that managementisation is bollocks."

Bradbury chips in that *In the Red* "is about faceless men in suits and bureaucrats – it's the story of every institution. Everywhere people who have learnt management skills are in the ascendancy, and original

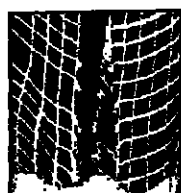
has a sad office full of pie-charts and files – the only way he can negotiate with the world. He has a sexual fantasy of being beaten with microphone-cable by Kate Adie, but he doesn't connect with anyone. He's like a pen with legs." Fighting a losing battle against the forces of red tape is

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

WHICH ONE OF THESE FINE BRITISH ARTISTS DESERVES TO WIN THE NATWEST ART PRIZE?



1. Zip
Sue Arrowsmith



2. Untitled (Spill)
Alexis Harding



3. Sea Inventory Drawings
Opening Swell
Tacta Dean



4. Untitled
Alan Brooks



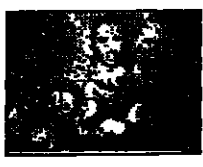
5. Fragola (Winged)
Alexandra Sarantis



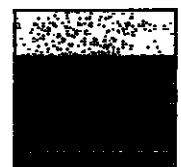
6. A Balcony in
Port Grimaud
Jeff Gibbons



7. Exposed Painting
Olive Green
Callum Innes



8. Honeybun
Nicky Hoberman



9. Without Tide
Sybil Berger



10. Snap on Silver Evers
Luke Cluffield



11. Cell
Jason Martin

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NatWest Group

ARTS DIARY BY DAVID LISTER

ONE OF the less appealing aspects of "Creative Britain" is the apparent desire of 10 Downing Street to shield the womenfolk – to borrow a favourite phrase of John Prescott – from works of art.

At the G8 summit this week the wives of the summit leaders were to have had dinner at the newly opened Ikon Gallery in Birmingham. I learn that the Foreign Office had agreed to the venue; and the dinner there was only cancelled after Foreign Office officials took photographs at the Ikon and showed them to Downing Street officials.

What was it at the Ikon that so worried Tony Blair's staff? It was an installation by Nancy Spero, the internationally renowned 73-year-old American feminist artist. In it she explores fetishistic images of women to celebrate female sexuality. The installation largely features ancient motifs of women, some of whom appear to be brandishing dildos.

To the amazement of staff at the Ikon, they were told shortly before the summit that the venue had been changed. No official reason was given. But unofficially some staff are convinced that 10 Downing Street, and in particular Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister's press secretary, were alarmed that the tabloid press might make too much of the juxtaposition of the First Ladies and the naked ladies.

Elizabeth Macgregor, director of the Ikon, said last night: "We would have been greatly honoured by a visit and it was good that it was considered. It's very disappointing

that the city wasn't able to show off one of its new facilities to the G8 leaders."

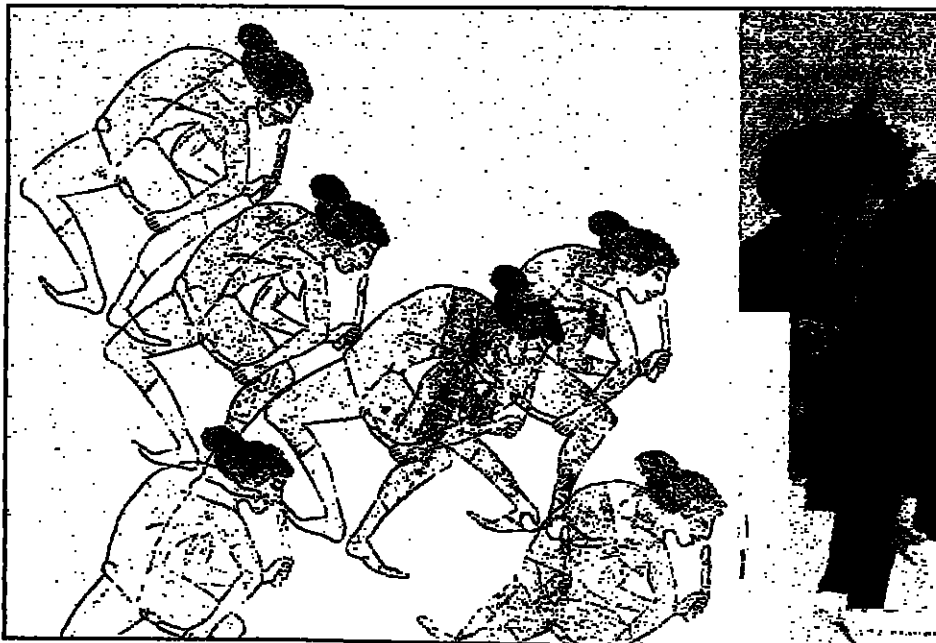
I'm loath to believe that Cherie Blair, Hillary Clinton and the other first ladies are really such delicate flowers that they would have had to reach for the smelling salts after seeing Ms Spero's installation. But I can all too readily believe that even in Chris Smith's "creative Britain", the Government's propaganda machine is so worried about tabloid reaction that it not only makes a patronising and condescending gesture to some of the world's most important women – it also passes up a chance to give a new art gallery an international profile.

Nothing to do with me, muttered the Secretary of State for Culture, Chris Smith, when the party-poopers on the Arts Council drama panel ruined his book launch on Thursday night by resigning en masse. Arms' length principle and all that. The council makes its own decisions, Smith reminded us.

But he does not escape entirely. The drama panel chairwoman, Thelma Holt, the award-winning West End producer, tells me she was particularly "distressed". She wrote to Smith saying she intended to resign a week ago, and he hadn't bothered to reply.

Such personal snubs can rankle. They can even make people upstage your book launch and embarrass you. To quote a phrase that used to be current in Chris Smith's Islington constituency: "The personal is political."

The films minister Tom Clarke enjoys taking the mick-



Spero's art (above) was thought to be too lewd for the ladies Photograph: Sean Pagar/NTI

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هكذا من الأصل

True romance – or just a microceleb on the make?

Ann Treneman
investigates a match
made in tabloid
heaven and finds that
all is not as it seems

THE village of Great Stukeley near Huntingdon, is home to John Major and not a lot else. Only the birds make much of a noise around here. Crime is low and you can see why: the only thing I can think of taking is a nap. But all of that changes when I start to ask a few questions about the former Prime Minister's son James, and his brand new fiancée, Emma Noble. Then, as Major senior himself would say, things got considerably more lively.

"News is created by the media and not by real people," says Bernard Crocombe at the Three Horseshoes pub. "Why don't you ask me about my son? What about your sex life? I think it's appalling that you are asking about their sex life!" I protest. I am not asking about anybody's sex life. Another businessman turns it into a privacy issue. "There is too much about people's private lives in the press and the media generates it," he states with a flourish. The landlord was jollier, but just as sure. "I'm sure the *Sun* is behind this. They are behind everything in Britain!"

Wrong. The story of Emma Noble and James Major is not about private lives, sex lives or even the *Sun*. It is about money and influence and the strange Nineties world of the instant micro-celebrity. The media is a player and a pawn in this game, but the strings are being pulled by a branch of the public relations industry called personal management. In this case the man who

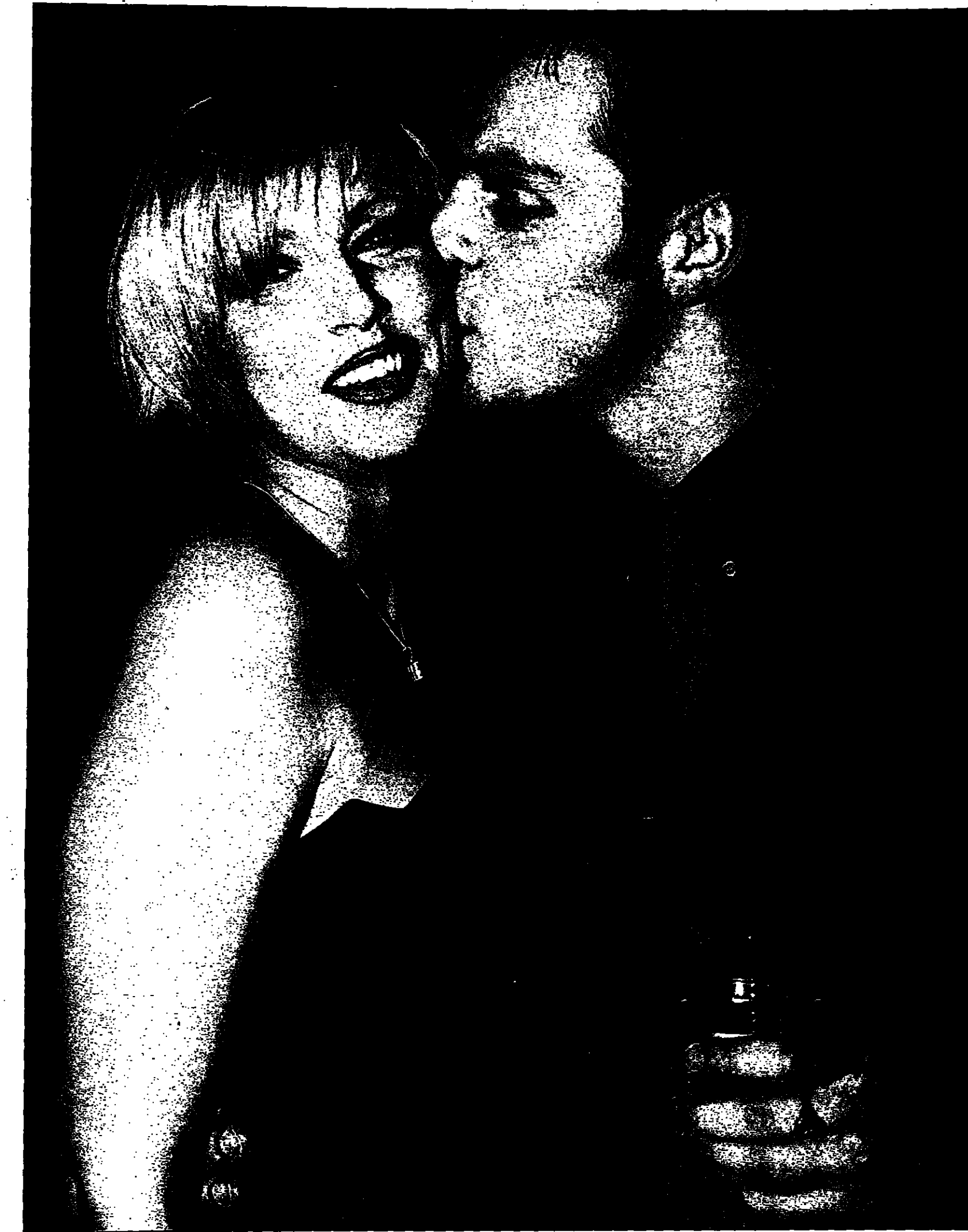
'It was instant attraction over champagne,' said one of those friends who talk to tabloids

should step forward out of the shadows is Neil Reading. At 28, he may look like a schoolboy but no one (except he) would deny he has the Svengali touch. He manages many others too, including the likes of Michael Flatley and, yes, Melinda Messenger.

It has been a good week for him. Three months ago no one really knew or cared about James and Emma except friends, family and the odd patron of glamour calendars and TV game shows. Last week the two got out of a taxi and made the front page. The news? Well, James had on a velvet suit and Emma was wearing, er, not very much really. As the *Mail* said (over the picture): "That's a nice suit James." As the *Sun* said (over the picture): "Fashion or trash?"

The answer, as it turns out, was *haute couture* actually. On closer inspection – it was that kind of picture – the dress was revealed to be a transparent vision by the design wunderkind Julien MacDonald. It cost £2,500, was on loan for the night and the only other one that exists is on loan to Janet Jackson. The dress comes with a black slip, the designer's studio said, and the slip was definitely sent with the dress to Ms Noble. Somewhere – the rumour is, in the taxi – the slip got lost. So, when Ms Noble stepped out of the taxi, her G-string was showing. Was that couture too? No, said the studio, that was the model's own.

So how did this all happen? After all



James and Emma only met each other on 19 February in the Green Room nightclub at the Café Royal in London. The answer to that has to be: pretty damn fast.

Emma, 26 and from Sticup, left her local comprehensive at 16 to become a hairdresser, but quickly found that modelling (and particularly topless) paid more. She changed her hair. "I used to have dark hair," she said in 1995, "and would always get chosen for the sultry shots, but now I'm blonde and I'm trying to be sweet and sexy,

not sultry. But I suppose you've got to stick with what you do best." Her breasts got larger. "My bust enhancement was my own personal choice," she told *Hell!* "There is no way I would change my body just for my career." She has been on the books at the Samantha Bond model agency for some eight years and, for the last three of those, has been a hostess on *The Price is Right*.

James, 23 and from Great Stukeley, was educated at £4,500-a-year Kimbolton School, near Peterborough. He left with

three A-levels to become a management trainee at Marks & Spencer. His parents never allowed any publicity shots of the family and, until Emma, Major Jr's only claim to fame was his relationship with a woman 12 years his senior. He recently left M&S for a job at the Green Room. (It may sound out of character but, don't forget, this is the family of garden gnomes and trapeze artists.) He is a bit of a lad and very much one that likes and is liked by the girls.

And so, on 19 February, Emma met

James and two worlds collided. "It was instant attraction over a glass of champagne," said one of those friends who always seem to talk to the tabloids. "They just got along." Within four days he had taken her to meet his parents. The Majors have said they liked her a lot. But then they would, wouldn't they?

Perhaps the most important factor in what has happened over the past few months is that at some point this year Ms Noble decided to leave her agency.

"We think it was about four months ago. She wanted personal management and we are a model agency," said Mike Diamond, of Samantha Bond. I catch up with Neil Reading on his hands-free mobile and he says that Emma came over to him in January. So not after she met James then? "No," he says, "that is absolutely not true."

The first we saw of James and Emma was the "canoodling" picture at the pre-Baba bash in early March. Neil denies managing this, personally or otherwise. "It was a slow week in Fleet Street and the whole thing went bananas. Let's face it, if there had been some proper news around it would have made a lead in William Hickory or Dempster and perhaps page three of the *Sun* and the other red-tops. But it's hardly front-page stuff."

But surely he made a phone call? (Photo agencies, PR and the celebrity mag and tabloid trade all work so closely that such things can take place almost by osmosis.) Neil protests again, perhaps a little bit too much. "I didn't even know they were going! The first I knew was when [the *Mirror* editor] Piers Morgan rang me at 8 o'clock that night and said: 'Neil, what is your client doing with James Major at Planet Hollywood?'" Right.

Neil Reading is not saying much about the nuts and bolts of his job. "I'm not going to tell you what I do," he said. OK, but what is the key factor with someone like Emma Noble? "It's not just a question of making them a household name," he says. "It's positioning them correctly within the media."

The past few months have been busy on the positioning front. Mr Major has decided to leave the Green Room to set up his own nightclub. Ms Noble has left *The Price is Right*. She wants to be a television presenter. So far she has presented one edition of *Exclusive* on Channel 5 and something is in the works with ITV. Her endorsement fees have reportedly risen

The Majors have said they liked her a lot. But then they would, wouldn't they?

from £2,000 to £7,000 for a few hours' work. She is in demand with "hundreds" of calls coming in. She has granted a few interviews and posed with bra and cat for *Hello!*

And there was also the little matter of a proposal. This took place at the Monte Carlo Music Awards in early May. The official announcement appeared in the *Times* on 14 May. The unofficial one appeared in the *Sun* on the same day. The headline was "Amazing Love Story". It was a short courtship but such things do run in the family: after all, John Major proposed to Norma Wagstaff after knowing her just 20 days back in 1970. The occasion, in their case, was the GLC elections.

Neil Reading is hurt by claims that James and Emma's only true love is publicity. "There has been lots of bitching and sniping, saying the whole thing is a PR stunt and that the relationship was created. This is not the case," he says the wedding, when it comes, will not be public. I'm not sure I believe him. "If it wasn't that the two of them are so in love and such strong-willed people, the media could quite easily have split them up," he insists.

So you see how the media is to blame again. Back in Great Stukeley, the afternoon is wearing on. I find Martin Gross hammering a shed together in his back garden. He says Emma and James may be in love but they also certainly like the publicity. And the outcome? "Let me put it this way, I don't see a wedding."

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JULIE FORSYTH, PROMOTIONS MANAGER.

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Give politicians a chance, too

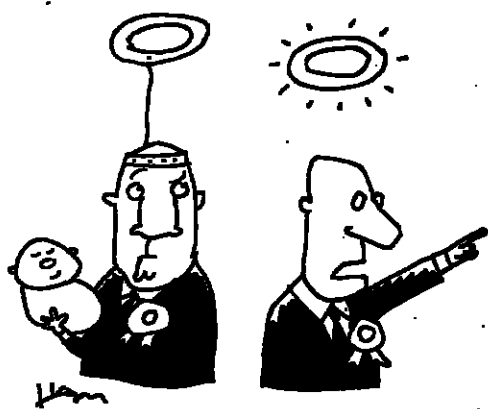
IT IS easy to be cynical about our politicians, especially in a week when one former Cabinet minister has been charged with perjury and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. But, as we wait for the results of yesterday's referendum, we should consider the achievement of the architects of the Good Friday Agreement. John Major and Tony Blair had no need to get involved in trying to solve a problem which had ruined the careers of politicians going back at least as far as Pitt the Younger, forced to resign when the King refused to allow Roman Catholic emancipation.

Mr Major's motives were both intangible and honourable. He identified Northern Ireland as one of his first priorities when he became Prime Minister, although he found it hard to pinpoint why. "It had been in my mind for a long time... The thought kept running through my mind that if the killing was happening in Surrey it wouldn't be acceptable. But I was never in a position to do anything about it. When I came to No 10, however, I realised I was in a position to do something about it," he told his biographer, Anthony Seldon.

Tony Blair's motives are similar. Again, as a man of reason and compassion, he felt compelled to use the power of high political office to do what could be done to prevent, or at least minimise, the killing. Bertie Ahern, John Hume, David Trimble and Mo Mowlam equally deserve high praise for their public service.

It is a far cry from the popular view: "Only out for themselves. Tell you what you want to hear. All as bad as each other." Common sentiments, but wrong. A few politicians are venal, corrupt, self-seeking and amoral. And, as a group, they tend to be over-endowed with vanity and ambition. But they also tend to be more idealistic than the average, and more practically concerned with the welfare of their fellow citizens.

Most politicians follow a familiar sequence. They start as idealists, impatient with compromise, and become gradually more pragmatic with age. Often, amid the ruthless calculations necessary to make it to the top, they lose sight of the human values which first inspired them. In any case, the service of the public good becomes easily confused with vainglory. One of the motives for any prime minister in Ireland has always been to secure their place in history. Indeed, all the architects of the Good Friday Agreement want to bask in public approval. That is no bad thing, however, and as a criticism it is a far cry from the cynical assumption that all politicians are sleazeballs.



Politicians are subject to many universal human weaknesses: they can be stupid, greedy and dishonest. But they are also more likely than most to seek, as John Smith said in his unintended epitaph, "the chance to serve". There is the spirit of restlessness on which civilisation has been built: the desire to order society better, to make a difference to people's lives.

As a class, politicians are as much distrusted as lawyers and journalists, but they are, as one commentator has characterised them, "honest opportunists". As we await the verdict of the peoples of the island of Ireland, we should pause to praise the politicians.

If only Blair's Babes would complain

IT WAS a formidable sight a year ago as they gathered round Tony for that picture. Some were *ingénues*, some craven followers of the line; others first-rate additions to the legislature – in proportions no different from the new men in town. What the women had in common wasn't the "Babe" tag or the suits. What they offered was the promise of their numbers – here, at last, a critical mass, sufficient women members of the majority party to make a difference to the conduct of the House of Commons itself. Surely they, New Labourites, modernisers, would want to launch an assault on this temple of antediluvian working practices, stupid ceremony and the dullness of rituals. Yet they haven't. They have fitted in, kept mum, gone with the manly flow of things as they always were. Some women MPs have even become apologists for the system, its hours and its paraphernalia. Their capitulation ranks as one of the greatest disappointments of the Blair era.

That's why the *Tribune* attack on "whingers" is misplaced. If only they had complained and done something about it. Feminists! Then at least we might have seen them pressing unstopably for alterations in the antiquated practices of the place. It's not a question of party loyalty. Women MPs elected in Blair's landslide were obliged to hew closely to the line on big-ticket issues such as taxing and spending – though it has been surprising how little back-up they have offered Harriet Harman in her battles over quintessentially "women's issues" such as childcare. What is so dismaying is that as a group, a formidable parliamentary phalanx, they have done nothing to force Ann Taylor's hand during her review of Commons' conduct. Why shouldn't debates take place when the rest of the country works; why no experiments with electronic voting, properly equipped offices, regional sittings (for select committees), new rules of debate? If the job takes an unacceptable toll on family life, change it.

Yet this ambiguity of attitude on the part of the women elected in 1997 is, unfortunately, all too symptomatic of this government's worst tendencies. It looks good. The rhetoric promises much. But when it comes to the sheer slog of institutional change, the will and the energy are just not there.

Nosey nanny state

THE NANNY state has poked its nose in the window of the wendy house. Trading standards officers have issued a warning about the safety of outdoor playhouses: "danger points" include hinges and windows which can trap fingers, splinters and protruding nails. Well, we never. This is surely taking public protection too far: in the end safety features cannot substitute for parental or *in loco* vigilance. Trading standards officers could better employ their scarce resources in protecting consumers from dangers they cannot judge, such as forgeries, genetically-modified or irradiated food and cowboy electricians and gas fitters. Time to make the playhouse out of bounds to Nanny.

PoWs' protest

Sir: The majority of Far East PoWs who survived brutal treatment at the hands of their Japanese (and Korean) guards have received disability pensions of up to 100 per cent since their return to Britain 53 years ago. Others will have received *ex gratia* payments amounting to thousands of pounds. This recognises that it is the duty of a country to look after its nationals who suffer as a consequence of war service; it is not that of the former enemy.

In terms of overall financial compensation, therefore, the PoWs continue to come off immeasurably better than those who did the actual fighting against the Japanese and were killed in action. (They have much else to be thankful for, not least their lives.) The parents of my 19-year-old orderly killed in an attack on a Japanese position in Burma received a one-off lump sum payment of £60 for the loss of their brave son. This amount was less than each PoW received from Japan under the terms of the 1951 Peace Treaty.

As to the demonstration planned against the Emperor of Japan (report, 22 May), which must also insult the Queen, members of the Burma Campaign Fellowship Group, including former PoWs, refuse point-blank to have any part of it. Those PoWs and civilian internees who turn their backs on their Sovereign and her guests will forfeit the nation's respect. They must call off their money-driven protest and instead help Britain and Japan to enter a new era as friends and partners.

JOHN NUNNELLEY
Chairman, Burma Campaign Fellowship Group
Petersham, Surrey

Arts Council walkout

Sir: Gerry Robinson's decisive action at the Arts Council will be applauded by most artists who have long resented the self-interest groups which have made up the bulk of the Executive's so-called advisory panels and yearned for a serious and professional Arts Council. Few have desired the panels' intercession and many been suspicious of the self-appointed co-teries which have developed.

Executive staff, highly respected by practising artists, and with a broad overview of the arts and serious knowledge of their own art forms, will now be able to get on with what they do extremely well indeed – talking directly to artists and taking decisions for which they are both responsible and accountable. Decisions in which self-interest is not an issue.

I doubt that anyone but Thelma Holt and her fellow panellists ("Exit left as Arts Council drama panel resigns", 21 May) will regret the passing of "all these names, handpicked by me". It has never been sensible for colleagues in a notoriously competitive profession to sit in judgement upon each other or for panel members to ride two horses – participate in grant decisions while benefiting from the public purse, the same pot, themselves.

Gerry Robinson's work is not about cost-cutting. It is about letting the buck stop in the right place and providing a clear set of rules for decision-making which is finally and properly transparent and professional.

JULES WRIGHT
Artistic Director
Womens Playhouse Trust (WPT)
London E1

20/COMMENT



A French high-speed TGV train, popular with passengers, but heavily subsidised (see letter, below right)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number
Fax: 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Hague's damaging stance

Sir: You describe (leading article, 21 May) William Hague's Eurosceptic position, as laid out in his recent speech in France, as a largely political gambit; a position which is advantageous for both himself and his party to adopt, regardless of the national benefits. This stance is not only mercenary, but also potentially very damaging to the interests of those whose votes he seeks.

The strength of a currency rests, in the final instance, on the confidence placed in it by the people who use it. If Mr Hague has any real and specific concerns about the euro, then of course he should voice them, but simply attempting to inculcate fear of all things European is both dangerous and shameful.

No matter what Mr Hague or anyone else may wish for, the euro is going to happen. He cannot bring it down; it is too late to stop. And for all our sakes we had better hope it is a triumphing success, because like it or not we will all be affected by it. The only winners of a euro failure, whether Britain is in or out, would be the financial vultures and the political nationalists; the rest of us would have to suffer the costs.

I would like to think that, given the choice, Mr Hague would prefer to be Leader of the Opposition in a successful Britain than the Prime Minister of a struggling one, but perhaps he feels differently.
ROBIN PRIOR
Southall, Middlesex

Mothering a full-time job

Sir: As Oliver James points out (Britain on the couch, 19 May), whether our nature (genetic inheritance) or our early nurture is the more important determinant of how we turn out, is still subject to full investigation. He rightly emphasises the importance of this research because "many clinicians believe early infantile neglect is an important cause of mental illness in adulthood".

In the absence of this vital evidence, it seems to me extraordinary that the Government is prepared to spend vast sums of taxpayers' money on encouraging mothers not to bring up their young children but to hand them over to childcare agencies. I would use the funds to provide substantial tax benefits to mothers who care for their children up to the age

of five, based on the precautionary principle that society does not need more emotionally damaged and disturbed children, teenagers and adults.

I find it difficult to understand why women feel impelled to have structured, ladder-climbing careers like men. I have enjoyed three "successful" careers – the most fully rewarding of which was motherhood.
Dr ANNE-CAROLE CHAMIER
Ardross, Ross and Cromarty

Sir: Suzanne Moore wonders what mothers did before they went to work (Comment, 20 May). Being a mother is work and no other job requires the same diversity of skills: being able to negotiate, arbitrate, manage one's time and answer a range of questions from why does an aeroplane remain in the sky to who will bury me when I die.

For the child, shouldn't it be their right to be mothered by their mother? Why do women have children only to hand them over to be cared for by someone else? Going out to work is the easy option; your day is structured for you, the job description written. I would challenge anyone to produce an adequate job description for "mother of two", unless, of course, the main responsibility was paying the child-minder.
LESLEY WILLIAMS
Kings Stanley, Gloucestershire

Parc teething problems

Sir: I welcome Stephen Shaw's letter following his recent visit to Parc Prison (21 May). His generous comments on the design of the prison and the commitment of our staff are much appreciated.

As with all new prisons – both public and private – Parc has had teething problems and an action plan has been drawn up to rectify them. As a governor with more than 30 years' experience in the Prison Service, I am wholly committed to implementing best practice at Parc.

Earlier this week the Home Secretary indicated that privately built and managed prisons offer best value for money. His statement follows a report by the Home Affairs Select Committee which concluded that privately managed prisons should be allowed to develop further.

I am determined to ensure that the performance of Parc Prison continues to improve and believe that the quality of service at Parc will just

tify the Government's confidence in the private prison sector.
BOB DIXON
Director, HM Prison Parc
Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan

Third World debt

Sir: Andreas Whitam Smith (Comment, 19 May) is wrong: there is no paradox at all in the concept of lender's responsibility. My father, a retired banker, describes what was dinned into him as the "canon of good lending": that lending is a proposition based on the borrower being able to repay and having a sufficiently good reason for taking out the loan in the first place. Any lending which runs the risk of becoming an unrepayable debt or ruining the borrower is bad lending.

That the Third World borrowers have on occasions been corrupt or naive is not open to question. But the real paradox is this: the poor saw little or no benefit from the loans, and are now being expected to bear the brunt of the suffering.
JAMES M B McLAREN
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

Fight to save duty-free

Sir: To accuse duty-free campaigners of "greed" for trying to save one of Europe's most popular and successful industries, employing over 140,000 people, is as insulting as it is uninformed (leading article, 20 May).

Independent studies of the implications of abolition cannot be so arrogantly dismissed as "extreme predictions". Abolition of duty-free will affect everyone – costing EU taxpayers up to £6.3bn over the next five years. The fight to save duty-free goes on.
BARRY GODDARD
Secretary General
Duty Free Confederation
London SW1

Army discipline

Sir: Your leading article on the "groping chaplain" (20 May) is unduly censorious of the Army. Inappropriate sexual behaviour is not unknown in many workplaces and social contexts, and is usually ignored. Only in the Army is it deemed necessary to hold a court martial, inevitably attended by media reports.
ANTHONY BILLINGTON
Horsham, West Sussex

Mr Emerson wrongly asserts that the law has a higher obligation than to reflect society's disgust. It is not a crime to lack compassion, it is to give expression to it, and the law against cruelty to animals is on the statute books for the same reason other criminal law exists, because society finds the actions proscribed to be seriously unacceptable.
STANLEY TYLER
Bury,
Lancashire

Paying the Saudi nurses

Sir: The release of the nurses Lucille McLauchlan and Deborah Parry by the Saudi authorities seems to have prompted a remarkable change of heart on the part of the tabloid press.

Only a couple of weeks ago, judging by their reaction to the Mary Bell case, it was morally repugnant to pay convicted criminals for their stories. Are we to assume then that their moral outrage is simply the bawling of those too slow to get an exclusive deal?
HELEN JOHNS
London SE5

QUOTE UNQUOTE

"I wonder sometimes: will life ever stop moving at this impossibly whirlwind pace?" – Chris Smith, Culture Secretary, discussing his job.

"I didn't know Mars Bars were kosher. How wonderful!" – The Prince of Wales.

"As we can now see clearly, the Government's new ethical policy turns out to be mainly paint and plaster" – Lord (Douglas) Hurd, former Foreign Secretary.

"If I was a politician and I got up to this sort of stuff, I would worry. But I'm a silly-faced actor and it's my

job" – Martin Clunes describing the TV hit *Men Behaving Badly*.

"If knowing what you want and going for it makes you a bitch, then that's a label I would like to earn" – Elizabeth Wurtzel, writer and feminist campaigner.

"Conservative Party policy is not unlike a Wagner opera. It is not always as bad as it sounds" – Jerry Hayes, former Conservative MP.

"I was the original Spice Girl. I didn't wear boots, but I wore sea-through things. There's nothing they wear that I didn't wear" – Shirley Bassey.

An agony
heed of th



DAVID
HARNOY

Beware



TREVOR
PHILLIPS

هكذا من الأمل

An agony uncle writes: take no heed of the generation gap



DAVID
AARONOVITCH

WELL, when some old showbiz roué ups and weds a lass 30 years younger than him, we know exactly what's going on, don't we? It's the vampire's need to renew itself by sucking the lifeblood of youth. And if it is a famous late-middle-aged Her bawling on the flesh of a Him almost young enough to be her husband, then we are all reminded (those of us old enough, at any rate) of Ursula Andress in the film version of *She*.

But, somehow, when it's the Treasury spokesperson for the Liberal Democrats who is getting hitched to a woman half his age, it all seems less sinister. Malcolm Bruce, aged 53, is not some ageing star attempting to prolong his professional life by bathing in girlish hormones. For a start, in politics it doesn't do to look too young. And Mr Bruce is a well-established sweetie of the kind who wears ties at home on Saturdays.

Yet his marriage later today to 26-year-old Rosemary Vetterlein has brought them both a flood of unwanted advice and unsolicited comments (some of them in this paper) - mostly unhelpful.

Columnists and agony aunts have pointed out that Rosemary is old enough to be his daughter, and - indeed - is almost exactly the same age as his daughter. And they are not over-impressed by the couple's insistence that they themselves are not bothered by the gap. If they are not, goes the argument, then they bloody well ought to be.

I suppose I ought to preface this section of my scribbles by stating the obvious truth that none of this is anybody's business but the Vetterleins-Bruces, and that perhaps we journalists ought to save our advice for those who ask for it. However, the horse is long since bolted from that particular stable. Its copious droppings stink on the cobbles leading to the wide world. So maybe the best I can do for Malcolm and Rosemary is to explain why I think they have done the right thing.

In these pages yesterday, the estimable and usually generous Virginia Ironside

catalogued the pitfalls that lie ahead of the happy pair, while admitting (grudgingly and in an undertone) that it just might work. And it is, initially, to the items in her catalogue that I wish to address myself.

Item one is the "oldest dad in the playground" argument. All the other fathers, runs this legend, are lumber men, bright of eye and fleet of foot. These chaps run races and catch balls with their enchanted offspring, they are vitality and vigour acting as a tonic, chasing away childish enervation. But if Malc and Rosie were to have babies together then - by the time they are in school - he'll be in his dotage. He won't be able to see the ball, let alone kick it. A new verse here for Ralph McTell: Have you seen the old man outside the nursery gates?

But it's all a myth. I'm a dad of 43 and I have never had to work so hard. Consequently, I'm never in the bloody playground. Never mind football, by the time the weekend comes it's all I can do to keep awake while we watch a video together. Yesterday, I barely managed to make it my five-year-old's class assembly because I had to - among other things - slave away at this article.

Had I been 65, though, and retired, I could have stuck around after the performance and congratulated her. What my children want is my time, and when it comes to that, frankly, they would be better off if I was 20 years older or 20 years younger.

Okay lets move on to the inevitable "but he'll die first". Well, darling, someone's got to. There was a brief vogue in the Seventies for simultaneous orgasms, but they were hard enough to organise - simultaneous natural death must be harder still. So, one partner or the other is going to spend some time bereaved, and which would be preferable: losing your old man when you're young enough to do something about it, or having him snuff it when you are in your declining years and incapable of forming new attachments?

Virginia's most ruthless argument, however, concerns sexual incompatibility. He'll be past it, she says, just when She'll be gagging for it. Now, my first thought is that this is a happy inversion of the usual situation, and will cut out all the headache nonsense. But my second is that the long-term answer is, of course, to have children. Small children depress the libido of even the most rapacious woman almost as much as football does, and for longer. By the time they are old enough to no longer act as a sexual brake, the chances are (as we've discussed) that He'll be dead, and She can look elsewhere.

Finally, I want to deal with the most insidious Ironsides of all: what she calls "social generation". Old Malcolm, born in the mid-Forties, will have been a young man when the Beatles were in full flight, when San Francisco was the place to be, and when Mick stomped the stage suggesting that we spend the night together. Rosemary, on the other hand, was only six when Johnny Rotten gobbled his first phlegm over Julie Burchill. The gulf is too great.

But this too is nonsense. In the first place, practically all modern hits are simply cover versions of old records. My eight-year-old constantly asks me if I know a newly released song - and I then sing her all the words.

And, in the second, it wasn't just grannies buying Sinatra albums in the shops this week you know.

Why the world's most famous capitalist hated the free market



DAVID
USBORNE

WATCHING Bill Gates defend himself hours after the Justice Department dropped its long-awaited anti-trust case on his software behemoth, Microsoft, last Monday, you were struck by a serenity in his demeanour. Through his boyish visage, there shone a conviction that he, not the government, is on the side of the angels.

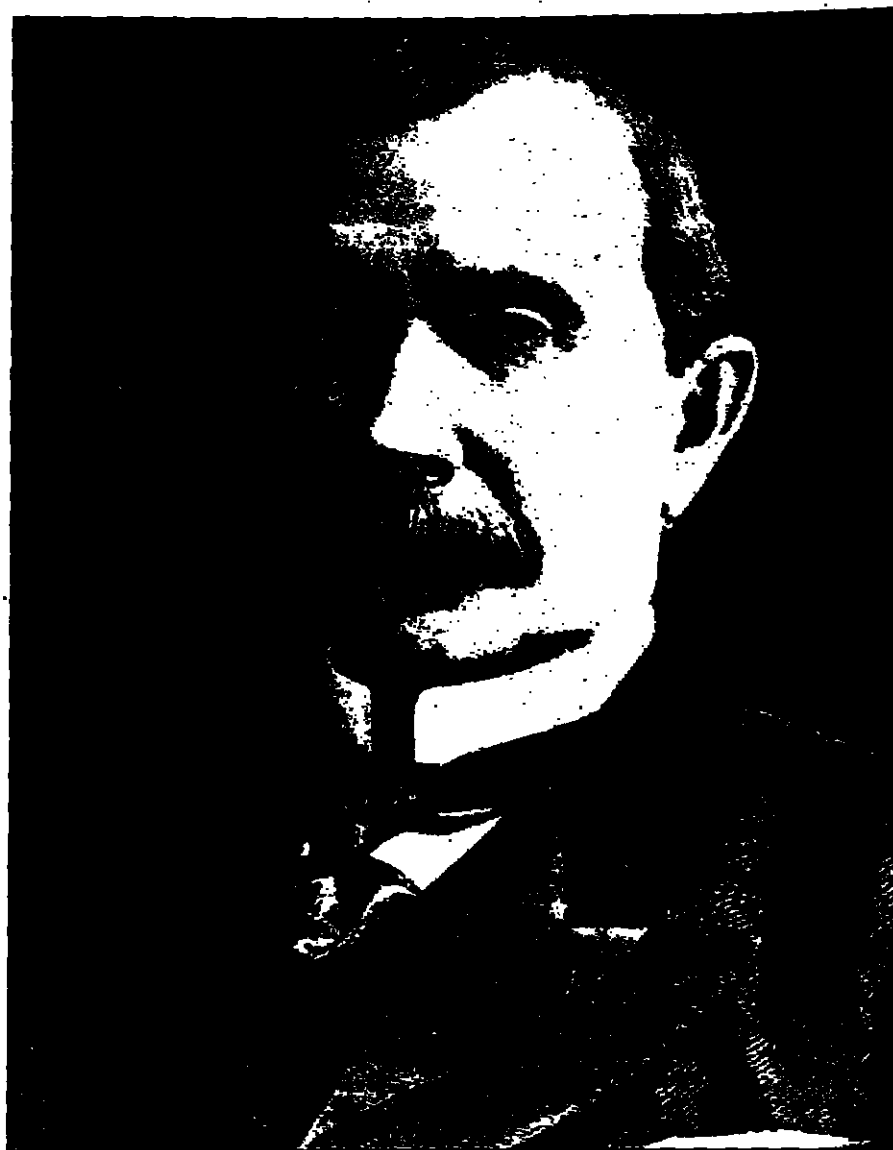
The lawsuit, which accuses Microsoft of manoeuvring to extend its crushing grip on the software industry to the newly discovered terrain of the Internet, was dismissed in indignation by Mr Gates as "a step backwards for America, for consumers and for the PC industry, which is leading our nation's economy into the 21st century". If Microsoft is guilty of anything, it is of innovating for the good of all of us.

To fend off the devils of a bad conscience, tycoons have always armed themselves with rationalisations of their tactics. Today, thanks to the scholarship of the business biographer Ron Chernow, we have the chance to view the psychology of Mr Gates against an especially illuminating historical backdrop - the story of that other icon of American enterprise who fell foul of Washington, John D Rockefeller Sr.

With fortuitous timing, for readers and author, Mr Chernow has just given us *Titan*, an opus appreciation of Rockefeller that is being greeted as the most insightful and compelling read ever written about the man who created Standard Oil. He was helped especially by the discovery of 1,700 pages of notes of interviews conducted with Rockefeller himself for an authorised biography that never saw the light.

Has Mr Gates read it? He should. While comparisons between himself and Rockefeller should be taken only so far, the echoes from the days of Standard Oil - from its founding by Rockefeller in 1880 to its breakup by order of the US Supreme Court in 1911 - to the predicament of Microsoft today are, at the very least, uncanny.

It was, for example, largely as a result of Rockefeller's ruthless reign that the Sherman Antitrust Act was signed into law in 1890. It is on that same act, still the Magna Carta of US government supervision of free



A face to make trust-busters quake - John D Rockefeller Photograph: Hulton Getty

competition, that the Justice Department bases its action against Microsoft today.

And the two men are tied in this fashion: both stumbled at young ages upon a new element that was to revolutionise society. For Rockefeller it was oil, that first gushed from the Pennsylvania sod in 1859, and for Gates it was the birth of the computer. Moreover, each managed to gain a near-90 per cent of the market in their chosen commodities, kerosene for the one and PC operating systems for the other.

What Rockefeller committed to win that dominance, however, was surely more wicked than anything Gates could now be charged with. He crushed almost all his refining rivals by a combination of predatory pricing, industrial espionage, the secret ownership of companies that pretended to be rivals and, above all, the securing of hidden rebates from railroad companies for every barrel they shipped, not just of his oil but of oil produced by his competitors also.

One small illustration offered by Chernow: grocery stores offering kerosene from independent refiners were liable to find that, suddenly, a competing store would open across the street in which every-

thing, not just kerosene, would be suspiciously cheap.

Most infamously, in 1872, shortly after Rockefeller did his rail deal, he perpetrated the "Cleveland Massacre", in one stroke taking over 22 of his 26 rivals in the city. The result of the Rockefeller strategy of buy out or crush was the trust - or, more accurately, the monopoly - that Standard Oil quickly became. Or the "Octopus", as contemporary reporters took to calling it.

At the heart of Chernow's book is the description of a man, who, not unlike Gates, believed that, whatever others cared to say, his achievements were ultimately all for the greater good of society. Indeed, it was many years before public distrust of Rockefeller gained politically viable momentum.

And for good reason. Rockefeller seemed to embody the qualities, beloved by Americans, of buccannering enterprise and personal advancement. Moreover, Standard Oil cut the average price of refined oil from 23 cents a gallon to 7 cents.

Similar dynamics have applied to Mr Gates. While Mr Gates has earned enemies in his own industry, as Rockefeller did in his, for many ordinary Americans he remains a hero rather than a villain.

field; we, today, might prefer terms like cartel or monopoly. "What a blessing it was," he opined, "that the idea of co-operation, with railroads, with telegraph lines, with steel companies, with oil companies came in and prevailed."

Critics who charged him with destroying competition, had misunderstood his saintly mission. He referred once to Standard Oil as "the Moses who delivered them [the refiners] from their folly which had wrought such havoc in their fortunes". He went on: "It was not a process of destruction and waste; it was a process of up-building and conservation of all the interests ... in our efforts most heroic, well meant - and I would say, reverently, Godlike - to pull this broken-down industry out of the Slough of Despond."

Was Rockefeller perhaps a little crackpot? How, in one personality, could two such disparate instincts be combined: the God-fearing figurehead, who, as Chernow amply illustrates, was a fine and devoted husband and father, and the ruthless conqueror who knew no greater drive than the appetite for money?

"I believe it is my duty to make money," Rockefeller said, "and still more money." In the same breath: "And to use the money I make for the good of my fellow man according to the dictates of my conscience." And, indeed, the largesse of Rockefeller, also detailed in "Titan", rightly established him as one of the greatest philanthropists America has ever produced.

The singular legacy of Rockefeller, however, was surely the Standard Oil ruling of 1911. It resolved the competition-vs-"co-operation" argument by setting in stone the equation of a free market governed at the same time by strict rules of fair play. And it established the right of the federal government to act to make sure those rules are obeyed.

What words might John D impart to Gates if he were alive today? He would advise first against underestimating the power of the Sherman Act. And he would also note this irony: the dismantling of Standard Oil made him far richer than he had ever been before.

Beware the Fossil Tendency flexing its muscles



TREVOR
PHILLIPS

I HAVE been a member of four different trades unions in my lifetime. Most of the ordinary trades union members I know are not activists. But I understand how trades union leaders often feel about their members.

The rank-and-file attitude to trades unionism is almost precisely the attitude that most people have to serious journalism on television: it's not really for them most of the time - but thank God it exists in moments of crisis.

So far, there is hardly a workers' revolt over the government's White Paper *Fairness At Work*. Few union members are probably aware of it; and even fewer want to think about it. They are content to trust that the Blairmobile knows where it is going, and that the destination will be good for Britain and

good for them. But there is a lurking contradiction in the Government's stance which may herald the first signs of the wheels coming off the bus.

Mr Blair is no fool. He knows he still needs union backing to deliver many of his plans. Labour Conference resolutions, for example, may mean little to New Labour; but they still have the power to make business nervous. The Conservatives claim that the unions gave Labour £110m during the opposition years, and with the prospect of endless political campaigning for local, regional, national and European tiers of government, no Labour leader can afford to dampen the unions' enthusiasm for the People's Party.

But you don't have to be cynical about it. The family-friendly workplace with provision for parental leave, the right to claim unfair dismissal earlier than at present, and the abolition of the ceiling on awards for unfair dismissal all represent an extension of individual rights of the kind that Blair has talked about frequently.

Broadly speaking, the thrust of the reforms is to encourage workplaces to recognise new patterns of work which involve frequent changes of job, and the need to make time for families.

The package will also give trades unions a push towards focusing on the individual rather than the collective rights of workers. This is in some ways inevitable, given the trend towards individual contracts. The overall tone of the White Paper should endear the Prime Minister to his union friends.

But the administration, as in so many areas, has been at pains to stress its difference from previous Labour governments. One manifestation of the Third Way is that the party of Labour is no longer the

prisoner of the unions. Nor its leader, it appears, in any way constrained by his own pre-election promises.

The row over the threshold proposed for union recognition is no accident. Ministers are proposing that the unions must have 40 per cent of the workers voting "yes" before recognition takes place. This is an idea which the CBI likes, which is fine, except that it isn't what Labour said during its election campaign. It is also an enormous hurdle to recognition.

At first the threshold looks like a democratic safeguard. But this may not be the way it works in practice. The very first bit of serious politics in which I was involved was the Grunwick strike in the mid-1970s, where a factory boss refused to allow the (mainly female Asian) workers to be represented by the Transport and General. Long before this became a *cause célèbre*, the management of the company made strenuous efforts to persuade the women that any backing for a union would

identify them as troublemakers. The aim was not to get them to be anti-union, but to be neutral. In the circumstances there was no difference between someone who said "no" and someone who said "I don't know". Under the Government's package, a smart employer, faced with a ballot will not need to go through the aggravation of locking workers out; he or she will just encourage workers to ignore the whole business. Far from encouraging democracy, the 40 per cent

threshold will turn out to be a charter for apathy.

The spin put on the threshold issue has made it seem more important than it really needs to be. The fact is that any workplace with more than 50 per cent of workers in union membership will have to recognise the union without a ballot. Unions will have the automatic right to represent individual workers in grievances and at tribunals, and those individuals will be free to join a union.

The strategy for most unions in most places will be to pick up members one by one until recognition becomes automatic. That, I would guess, is how it will happen in the majority of workplaces. However, the threshold provides the platform for grim set-piece battles of the old-fashioned kind.

Who wants to return to the days of unions accusing bosses of intimidation, or to introduce the sight of sharp-suited "consultants" wandering the corridors and the floors explaining to workers that they would be better off talking to their bosses individually and separately from the unions? The result could be a return to some of the unpleasant industrial stand-offs of yesterday which gave unions a bad name, and frightened managers into being pathetic doormats.

Even if there are no battles of this kind it will still leave the mass of trades union activists - even those prepared to give The Third Way a chance - with the feeling that this is a government unsympathetic to their cause.

We can already hear the Fossil Tendency flexing its leathery muscles in the Labour movement. The sort of shock we saw in the recent Aslef election where an Old Labour leader was deposed by a Fossil Labour challenger, who belongs to Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party is thought to be a one-off. I would not be so sure: the activists are already suspicious of New Labour. Every alleged betrayal edges them closer to hostility.

Is this really what Mr Blair wants? I doubt it, unless some deranged spin doctor has convinced him of the need to create a small and easily crushable enemy to haul out in times of political embarrassment.

Whatever the strategy, the price of reawakening the Fossil Tendency in the trades unions looks just too high to pay. Labour can't afford it, and nor can the country. The threshold is not that important; during the bill's passage through Parliament, a magnanimous concession would avoid a messy, unnecessary sideshow.

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Racal hits peak on high hopes of Telecom float

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

RACAL TELECOM, due to become the third spin-off from **Racal Electronics**, should enjoy a stock market valuation of £675m.

Stobroker Henderson
Crosthwaite believes Racal's shares are therefore worth around 450p. They rose 15.6p to 371.5p, a peak.

Sir Ernest Harrison, Racal's chairman, has already successfully hived off Vodafone and Chubb Security (now part of Williams) as standalone companies. His intention is to float 25 per cent of KT although if the Vodafone formula is followed the group will eventually sever its link with its parent.

Henderson's telecom analyst Chris Godsmark, formerly business correspondent of *The Independent*, says Sir Ernest has built one of Britain's largest telephone services from a 1988 standing start. He believes Telecom Italia and Deutsche Telecom thought about buying RT

when Racal started to review its options last year.

At least one bid did materialise. Duncan Lewis, former chief of Granada's media division, got together a £450m offer but Sir Ernest said no and decided to follow the flotation path.

"Rascal's decision to pursue a flotation as the best way to maximise shareholder value has proved fortuitous," says Mr Godsmark. "In the six months since that decision share prices in the telecom sector have risen strongly on a combination of bid speculation and more optimistic predictions of the growth of data traffic."

• **Energis**, RT's closest competitor, has climbed from 251p in the autumn to 779p, he points out.

Sir Ernest, who is 72, has been chairman of Racal, which has 26.6 per cent of National Lottery organiser Camelot, for 32 years.

As RT prepares for market, the struggling Ionica wireless

telephone group crashed 49p to 36p. It is seeking more cash and is looking for a strategic investor which could result in "significant dilution to existing shareholders". The shares were floated last summer at 390p, producing a £460m war-chest. They

Footsie turned on a mixed display, ending 20 points up at 5,955.6. Supporting indices were once again in rampant form. The mid cap surged 43.3 to a 5,897.8 peak; the small cap added 6.1 to a 2,788.4 high.

Among the mid caps **Electrocomponents** enjoyed a 34p gain to 584p with the help of vague takeover speculation.

Bus and train shares, such as Stagecoach and First-Group, were again given the green light as the market continued to draw encouragement from the coming Government White Paper on the transport industry. Stage

coach advanced 72.5p to 1,367.5p and FirstGroup 17p to 443.5p. Railtrack gained 23.5n to 1,229.5p, a high.

Barclays, after meeting analysts, put on 26p to 1,696p; Halifax rose 33.5p to 842.5p. Rolls-Royce was another to score from investment presentations. As its US roadshow drew to a close the shares climbed 6p to 300p.

Share Spotlight

share price, pence

Year	Price (\$)
1987	~2,800
1988	~3,000
1989	~3,000 - 3,200
1990	~3,000 - 3,500

Month	Number of New Cases (approx.)
M	1400
J	1400
J	1350
A	1400
S	1500
O	1500
N	1500
D	1600
J	1700
F	1900
M	2100
A	2500

EMI, figures next week, fell 19.5p to 522.5p as Seagram, in effect, clinched the takeover of PolyGram, ending any lingering hopes of a another strike at EMI.

Rentokil Initial, up 18.5p at 431.5p, was one of the Footsie leaders. Many await a strike for Compass, the contract caterer, up 42p to 1,269p. **Safeway**, on continuing

speculation about a break-up bid, rose 12.75p to 393p. British Land, in association with Asda, remains the most likely predator.

Any deal would involve Asda cherry picking around 60 Safeway stores. Such a manoeuvre could overcome the Government's objection to an Asda/Safeway merger. A subsidiary of the Sainsbury Group could

Mirror, the newspaper group, rose a further 6.5p to 218p as the German Axel Springer Verlag group admit-

ted it may bid. The shares have
fallen 21.5% this week.

Mits, the computer group elevated to Footsie this week, fell a further 37p to 3,380p. Newcomer ComputaCenter

The Falkland Islands oil tiddlers had another gushing session although profit takers took their inevitable toll. Desire touched 475p; it closed

at 415p, up just 1p. Greenwich Resources, after hitting 41p, ended 1.5p off at 36.5p. Westmount, at one time around 275p, ended at 245p, up 10p.

Imperial Chemical Industries managed to resist an ABN Amro downgrade. The investment house described the shares as "overvalued". It expects profits of £531m this

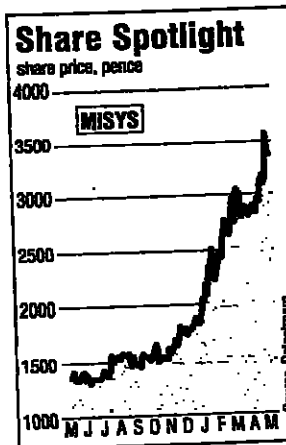
Ladbroke was another to shrug off uncomfortable developments - the likelihood that it will have to sell more than 100 betting shops. The shares were 2p off at 345p.

TAKING STOCK

GOWINGS, with an unusual combination of Ford dealerships and Burger King fast food restaurants, should achieve profits of £1.7m this year and just over £2m next, believes stockbroker Greig Middleton. The shares, at 122.5p, "offer considerable potential", says analyst David Wilkinson. Guinness Peat, which once made big noises, has 14.6 per cent but the founding family has more than 50 per cent.

BRITISH Taxpayers Association, the troubled group being developed as a go-go investment vehicle, has been given a tantalising new name – Bearbull Active Strategic Investment Co. The company is being revamped after what amounted to a rescue bid. The shares, traded on Ofex, rose 0.5p to 4p. They once nudged 30p.

CERAMICS group John Tams has had a number of bid approaches. The shares up 3p at 25.5p, have edged from 17p last month.

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It's been an amazing month for wealth creation. Britain's new entrepreneurs are having a ball. By **Nigel Cope**

The array of talent paints an interesting picture of entrepreneurial Britain. The first point is that Britain's businessmen and women seem to be more dynamic. Rob Johnson, an American who lectures in entrepreneurship at London Business School says he feels the UK is now catching up with the go-getting, "can do" busi-

As Nigel Crockford, a partner at accountants Price Wa-

	Cliff Stanford Demen Internet	Mike Norris Computacenter	Tom Singh New Look	Mogens Tholstrup Daphne's restaurant	Terry Liddard British Regional Airlines	Bridget Blow ITNet	Tom McCabe Swiftcall
Business	Demen Internet is Britain's largest supplier of Internet services which has ridden the computer nerd wave. It is highly poised to huge US companies like Netscape and the mighty Microsoft.	Britain's leading distributor of personal computers.	Fast growing cheap and classy fashion chain where you can buy a shirt for a tenner. Operates a rapid sale in a bid to off-pool by getting new stock in every week to keep the punters interested.	Restaurant to the Kensington smart set and various "IT" girls like Sara Palmer-Tomkinson and other "moneys-cashers". Controls three restaurants-Daphne's, Pasha and The Collection.	Operates 86 routes under the Maccs Airline name and has links with BA. Liddard's company is set to expand with a fleet of new jets.	The former information technology division of a supplier of IT systems it has benefited from Millennium bug fears.	Offers cheap international phone calls that undercut more established rivals like BT.
Background	Born in Essex Stanford has always been numbers. Learned book-keeping from his mother at the age of 10 and was running a little by 15. Predictably he then became an accountant.	A dyslexic Essex boy who failed his English O Level several times but was graded at maths. Joined Computacenter as a junior salesman in 14. Rose through the ranks to become chief executive. Aged 36.	Aged 49. Son of Indian immigrants who came to Britain in the late 1940s. Parents settled in Somerset and later opened a drapers' shop. Educated at Wellington school then the University of Wales.	Grandson of a Scandinavian chess magnate. Came to London at the age of 12. Now 37 this is his second home. A future of London society.	Former footballer. Played centre half for Headington United the forerunner in Oxford (now called) in the old Southern League.	Joined as a director in 1992 but then left the management buy-out three years later. Aged 48.	A former actor who played a part in Minder and then ran a telephone dialling agency. Has been married and even played with a sports team with the name of St-Johns United.
How they started	Set up Demen Internet in 1992 with £20,000. It was one of the first dial-up Internet access providers and achieved 1,000 subscribers in six months offering services for less than £10 a month.	The business was founded by Philip Holme and Peter Ogden who rode the PC wave as companies started replacing their mainframe computers. But Mike Norris is CEO and is seen as the key to future growth.	Borrowed £5,000 to open his first shop in Tottenham in 1969. Now has 444 shops and sales of more than £300m. Trading on the stock market next month with a value of £350m.	Opened Est restaurant in London's Soho in 1981 after giving up on being a designer. Then bought Daphne's, a former favorite with Hollywood types in the 1960.	Joined as a founder director when the business was re-launched in 1992. Started with just three planes including a Fokker F27 on loan from a German museum.	More of a professional manager than an entrepreneur. But had the foresight and gumption to launch the MBO that has made her fortune.	Started Swiftcall in 1988 when he had 25,000 customers and in 1992 sold £1.5m pre-paid international cards which other service providers call at up to half the going rate.
What they're worth	Has just bagged £33m from selling out to Scottish Telecom. He turned down a higher offer from a British buyer because he wanted Demen to stay British.	A staggering £344m each following Computacenter's £1.3bn stock market flotation this week. They are even giving £50m to charity. Norris's stake is worth more than £20m.	Singh is one of the richest Asians in Britain. Once nearly a listed of the business worth £120m. Sold a controlling stake three years ago for £170m. Has paid himself £10m in salary and bonuses over the last five years.	Sold out for £3.5m last week to Belgis, a restaurant chain run by another colourful entrepreneur, Ludo Johnson.	Should be £7m richer when the company floats next month.	Should make a paper profit of up to £12m from the company's forthcoming stock market listing.	Is said to be about to pocket £10m from selling the company to BT Japan.
Lifestyle	Though his motto is "Greed is Good" he is no baron to spend his wealth. But he has treated himself to a Saab convertible. Has set up a new venture to back British entrepreneurs.	Gradually admits to those super-luxury accessories: a Ferrari and a flat in London's Docklands.	Obsessed with the business and going to the gym. Also takes on psycho-analysis. Once visited four analysts at once because he had been thinking too "analytically".	Life is one big party for the dashing Dane who was linked with a long list of Hello-type young women including Ms Palmer-Tomkinson, Sarah Bryant and Lady Victoria Harvey.	Lots of travelling at reasonable rates.	Private individual. Doesn't much like being referred to as a "new millionaire".	Comfortable and getting more so as the firm.
Management Style	Inclusive. Many of Demen's £20 million a year in advertising wins come from share options.	Dynamic. Follows the Eddie Shaw "You can't afford to be a misadventurer" sales opportunity.	Driven but not autocratic. Apparently the New Look staff would see him as their "spiritual leader".	Marketing and PR. Not more PR and less New Look staff. A lot of the 800 most important people in London to launch a restaurant.	No nonsense. Use his backing.	Inclusive. Some 1,200 ITnet workers also own shares.	Good to work with. But don't waste that Minder theme tune. He's heard it too many times before.
What People Say About Them	"I wish I'd thought of it." is probably a regular tirade of it.	"You get the impression Mike is very much a salesman but he's very bright," says a Venture capital backer.	Some criticism in the City about abandoning his float four years ago. Then there is the rather unconvincing cash card. "Investors have rarely made money out of Indian businessmen," one stockbroker says.	"In 1993 I hadn't a clue who he was. Now I see him at the most exclusive house parties in the south of France and he arrives best beer aboard in Germany." Dai Llewellyn, Roddy's brother, on Mogens' new found grace.	Sir Michael Bishop Chairman of British Midland Airlines certainly won't knock him. He currently owns 20% of BMA. John is making even more money from the fleet than Liddard.	Not much. Yet to achieve a high profile and probably doesn't want to.	A nice man. A very, very nice man. But then with £100m they would say that wouldn't they?

"I like having money in my pocket. But it would be no fun to win it on the football pools. The thrill for me is to make it through business deals."

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variable)*	
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variable)*	

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Saturday 23 May 1998



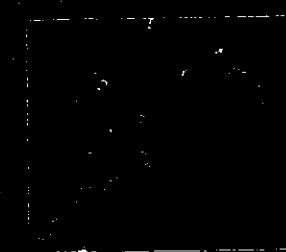
PICTURE OF THE WEEK Opera-goers in reflective mood enjoying the garden on the first evening of Glyndebourne's opera season. Photograph by John Voos. To order a print of this picture (12x9in) call 0171-293 2534

TRAVEL



Marcel Pagnol's
Provence: 3
Kazakhstan to China
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Cairo: 5,000 years in
one weekend: 9

LEISURE



Gardens to visit:
the clipped appeal
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SPORT



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Rusedski look ahead to
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Back in the fold:
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prepares for his return
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Broken hearts. Robbery. Murder.
(And you were looking forward to a quiet bank holiday?)

THE AFTERNOON PLAY: "The Greengage Summer" Rumer Godden's coming-of-age tale set in France before World War II. Joss falls for the charming Eliot but he ends up stealing more than her heart. Bank holiday Monday afternoon, 2.15 - 3.45.

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YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

Dylan Thomas waxes lyrical over the air waves. Swansea celebrates its prodigal son with a festival this July and August

Poet's corner

Every summer Swansea revels in the rhythms and rhymes of Dylan Thomas. This year there's a special festival, writes Patrick Ellis



Swansea sees the return of Dylan Thomas once again this summer. Between 24 July and 24 August the first Dylan Thomas Festival to be run by the city will be held in the newly dedicated Dylan Thomas Centre. The event will culminate in a four-day international conference on "Dylan Thomas and his Contexts", held in association with University of Wales Swansea. It is open to academics and non-academics alike. The bonus for committed fans of Thomas is the possibility of staying in what remains of the old Swansea Grammar School, where the poet edited the school magazine.

The young Thomas would certainly recognise the festival venue that has recently been dedicated to his memory. Set squarely in the centre of what was then Swansea's commercial hub, the Municipal Offices and House of Correction with their elegant arched windows and columns of honey-coloured granite were built in 1829. Since being replaced by the Guildhall further to the west in the Thirties, the building has seen some changes. For many years it served as a college of further education before sliding into disuse and dereliction in the early Eighties. After being rescued and renovated it was reopened in 1995 to host the International Year of Writing and Literature. Currently the centre houses the Dylan Thomas exhibition, "I, in my intricate image", as well as promoting varied and lively poetry, theatre and musical events throughout the year.

Thomas, who was born in 1914 in Cwmdonkin

Drive, would have known every hiding place and climbable tree in nearby Cwmdonkin Park where Swansea's pride in its famous, if somewhat prodigal, son is further marked by a garden dedicated to his memory. From the top of the park the views over the broad sweep of Swansea Bay would still be familiar to him. The twin islands of Mumbles Head, reputedly taking their name from *mumbus*, the Latin word for breasts, were to call him westwards, away from the safety of his childhood home to the beautiful Gower Peninsula, to West Wales and ultimately to America.

And in true vagabond poet fashion, Thomas answered that call - first on his own and then with his wife and family. But however restless his spirit, he still seemed unable to cut his links with the quiet, coastal Welsh towns of his youth.

The accommodating peace of Newquay, where the A486 finally comes to rest beside the waters of Cardigan Bay, held him for a while. Though it thrived in the 18th and 19th centuries as a ship-building town, Newquay has long taken its foot off the gas. Ship-building has been replaced by fishing and tourism and, more recently, the town has been promoting its Atlantic bottlenose dolphin population, which can often be seen in the bay. Between 1944 and 1945 the Thomas family rented the bungalow Majada from a local doctor. This was a productive period for Thomas. While he was here he wrote the heart-breaking

beautiful "Fern Hill", in memory of childhood holidays at his aunt's Fernhill Farm near Carmarthen.

They didn't stay at Newquay very long. Allegedly one night the bungalow was visited by a military man recently returned from active service, who was armed with a machine gun and a hand grenade. He had apparently drunk a considerable amount of alcohol and was concerned about the close ties that his wife seemed to have formed with the poet. The soldier fired into the ceiling, but Thomas coolly managed to persuade him to hand over his weapons. At the ensuing court case a lenient view of the soldier's actions prevailed. He got off. By this time the Thomases had moved.

With its usually unhurried tranquillity it has been suggested that Newquay was the model for Llaregyb, the fictional coastal setting for Under Milk Wood. Llaregyb, whose spelling was slightly modified to disguise Thomas's little joke (the reversal of the phrase "bugger all") probably draws on many of the towns and villages he knew - places such as Ferryside, Fishguard, Mumbles and of course, Laugharne where, according to his friend Vernon Watkins, he spent some of the happiest days of his life.

Almost feminine in its gentle undulations, Laugharne today seems to be pervaded with a soft permanence in its slow streets as the town reclines along the shore where Corran Brook meets the River Taf. Laugharne Castle still dominates the place. It was originally built as a Norman defence of the mouth of the river.

In today's somewhat calmer political climate it is maintained at public expense and defended by a charming and informative ticket lady who collects the £2 entry charge. The money is well spent. The views from the castle tower over the flat estuary leading into Carmarthen Bay can't have altered much since the days when Thomas used the gazebo built into the east wall to compile the short stories that were to become *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*.

Whether it was the proximity to the sea, the quiet maturity of the town or just the absence of gun-toting husbands is open to debate but Thomas certainly felt comfortable here. And here he chose to live. His last home, the Boat House, perched on the edge of town, almost overhangs the estuary. From his writing den in the cycle shed, he could gaze out over the water searching for inspiration; or, alternatively, he could sneak off up to the pub. After Thomas died in New York in 1953, his body was brought home. It is buried in St Martin's Church in the town, with a simple white wooden cross marking the grave.

Back in Swansea, the spirit of Thomas lives on at the Dylan Thomas Theatre, home of Swansea Little Theatre, of which the young Dylan was a member. In the nearby maritime quarter his statue half rises from its seat. As he gazes over the Maritime Museum's collection of boats and the private yachts moored in the old dock basin, is the poet making for the bar, or has he been inspired to write one last poem?

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows ...

Today, the search for possible contenders for Shakespeare's wood in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is hindered by the fact that Athens is definitely not a green city. The view from the top of the Acropolis is one of a sprawling white metropolis in every direction, though 50 years ago the city was a great deal smaller, and woods would have been seen on the horizon.

The ancient Athenians used the word *polis* to describe the city of Athens. However, they also sometimes used *polis* to refer to the rocky outcrop of the acropolis, the sacred heart of the city. In ancient times the *polis* of Athens was not easily defined and there was an ongoing debate among the intellectual elite as to the outer limits of the city.

Philosophers argued over whether the Acropolis walls or the long walls built under Themistocles marked the city's boundaries, and the farming inhabitants of the demes who lived many miles from the Acropolis argued that they too were included in the city. It is possible, therefore, that Shakespeare's wood could be "near Athens" in the sense of near to the Acropolis and the Agora, the ancient sacred and political centres of the city.

These days, the only surviving green areas near to these classical ruins are the National and Zappeion gar-

Cheap flights to Athens mean that a month from now you could go in search of the 'wood near Athens' where the action in Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' takes place. Moira O'Neill investigates

dens which boast subtropical trees, peacocks, water-fowl, ornamental ponds and a botanical museum. However, these gardens did not exist in Shakespeare's day; they were created only during the last century.

But you will find greenery, lots of it, if you go to the north-east suburban limit of Athens to Lykabettos, the highest of the hills of the city. It still has wooded slopes where visitors can walk in the shade, but is now a green island in a sea of houses.

Travelling in the same direction 14km further north east of Athens you'll find Kifissia, an attractive and popular "garden city" on the south-west slopes of Mt Pentelikon. The shade of its pine trees offers a welcome relief from the glare of Athens. A few miles further north of Kifissia, Ekali, a pleasant summer resort is also situated amid pine woods.

Heading out to Eleusis west of Athens, you will pass the botanic garden on your left with its tall poplars.

A little further on, Plato's Olive Tree is one of the few survivors from the famous grove that once bordered the Kifissos from Kolonos to the sea. Along the same route, laurels sacred to Apollo once flourished in the area around the Monastery of Dhafni, which owes its name to these trees.

Wooded hills can also be seen to the west of the approach along the Mesogia road to the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion. However, I think that these woods are too far from the city to be a possible contender.

North west of Athens, Mount Parthina is cut by deep ravines and covered with pine trees. It has more than 1,000 plant species, several easy, well marked trails and two refuges.

The most appealing possibility for a setting for a *Midsummer Night's Dream* is somewhere on the west slopes of Mount Hymettos, which reach almost to the

eastern outskirts of Athens. Here the aromatic plants and shrubs that produced the best food for bees in classical times are now less widespread, though terebinth, juniper, thyme, sage, mint and lavender are still to be found and you can easily imagine the intrigues of Puck and Oberon taking place in these fragrant surroundings. But what the place lacks in ebullient greenery it makes up for in love. A climb through the woodland around the 11th-century Kaisarianis monastery 5km from Athens will lead to a hilltop fountain idyllically set among pine, plane and cypress trees. The water that bubbles from this fountain was believed to have magical properties; it was dedicated to Aphrodite, whose temple stood nearby.

Easylet (0990 292929) has promised a return fare of £140 when it begins flights from Luton to Athens on 10 July. The impending arrival has caused the other airlines flying to Athens - British Airways (0345 222111), Cronus Air (0171-580 3500), Olympic (0171-409 3400) and Virgin Atlantic (01293 747747) - to lower their fares; for a trip from Heathrow in June, Cronus is quoting £161 return.

For more on Greece, see page 6

SIMON CALDER



The chap at the Alamo car rental depot in Orlando was charming. "Where will you be travelling this week?" Rouched by his interest, I outlined my plan to head to Florida's Gulf Coast.

Immediately his tone changed to one of surprise. Leaning forward with an air of deep concern, he said "Sir, I would strongly advise you to upgrade to a bigger model."

"No thanks, I'm very happy with a small car." The promised model was about the size of a Fiesta.

"If you were to upgrade, I could probably get you a mid-size for the price of a compact - just \$9.99 a day."

And the rest, I thought uncharitably. Renting a car in America is like taking a freeway off-ramp as you pass somewhere dodgy, like Dallas. As soon as you deviate, whether from Interstate 10 or the pre-paid fully inclusive car rental rate, you start paying. To that \$9.99 you can add Florida tax and airport fees, and probably a whole trunk-full of other charges; a state government that is mean-minded enough to charge renters five cents (yes, the equivalent of three pence) per day for "battery and tire disposal" has many ways to dip into your holiday spending.

"No thanks, I'll take the economy car." After a 10-hour flight I just wanted to get going. Instead, the discussions continued in a rather less cheerful manner.

"Just a moment, sir, I think we may have a problem."

Ten minutes - and several hushed conversations with managerial types - later, he handed me the paperwork for a Suzuki Esteem. "It's rather larger than an economy model."

This was one of the largest car rental depots on the planet, yet it did not have a single small car. It is tempting to deduce from this that almost every client who has booked an economy model is persuaded to upgrade - and the supposition that anyone who stands firm will get a bigger car than planned anyway. Evidence for or against, please.

The whole episode was mildly amusing until I hit the rush-hour traffic and started thinking about the environmental implications. Since smaller cars generally use less fuel, you would hope that an environmentally responsible company would encourage people to trade down. Perhaps it is far fetched to imagine a rental rep asking "do you really need that gas-guzzling Lincoln, ma'am? The Geo Metro is much more economical." But at the very least, car rental companies should apply no pressure on customers to drive a bigger, heavier and more damaging car.

In Britain, the railway still provides an alternative for people who prefer not to drive - but in certain quarters there appears to be a concerted campaign to get people off the trains and on to the roads.

Virgin Trains is based in Birmingham. Last Tuesday, passengers at New Street station trying to find the right platform were confronted by a complete set of blank screens. (A rise to prevent people seeing how late the trains were running?)

And get those sandwiches packed; from Monday, Virgin is stopping serving lunch or dinner on Birmingham-London trains.

KLM uk (0990 074074) is offering a fare of £78 return from Southampton, £10 more from Stansted.

A month from now ... you could be warming up for the England-Colombia thriller at a new Colombian restaurant: Mango, in Highbury, north London (0171-704 1960), where the speciality is *tapas*. Or try the real thing on a trip to Bogotá on Avianca (0990 767747), the only non-stop from Britain to Colombia.

A year from now ... Tibes Travel (01728 685971) will run a trip to the American tribal lands of Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico. One of the 11 nights is spent sharing a Navaho *hogan*. The cost is £1,775 plus air fare to Arizona.

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A train
Rail travel throughout Wales for less than £9 per day is offered by the Freedom of Wales Flexipass. From tomorrow you can travel anywhere on the network, in any eight days in a fortnight, for a total of £69 (railcard-holders £45.55). The pass also covers the "missing link" in the principality's rail system, allowing free travel on the narrow-gauge Ffestiniog Railway between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Porthmadog. Phone 01766 512340.

A boat
The new Portsmouth-Cherbourg fast ferry opens up additional day-trip possibilities to northern France. This weekend is extremely busy, but later on there should be availability at £12 per person and £15 per car (P&O, 0990 980980).

CHECK IN

A plane
Seven years ago there were no direct flights between Britain and Cuba; now you can choose from three services on Cubana (0171-734 1165) to Havana from Gatwick, plus one from Manchester. Tuesday's departure goes via the island of Cayo Largo, perhaps the most accessible desert island you can reach from Britain.

A room
... on the island could be effectively

free. Several tour operators, such as Hayes & Jarvis (0181-222 7811) are packaging flights with hotels for about the same (£400-£500) as you'd pay for the air fare alone.

A meal
"Jacques Chirac took President Yeltsin to Chez Yvonne at 10 rue Sanglier, a venue famous for its *patronne*. Alsatian specialties and traditional French cooking at surprisingly reasonable cost" - Margaret Campbell recommends this restaurant in Strasbourg. In her £250 guide to the city in next Wednesday's *Independent Eye*. A possible adjunct for those not fluent in French could be the *French Menu Reader* by Maggie Plunkett (Starway Publications, £4.99, call 01386 854864). It differentiates between *alsacienne* ("a dish

mainly with ham, sausage and sauerkraut") and *alsatian* ("light dry white wine"). The author concedes "Since there are 250 ways to cook a fillet of sole, I hope you appreciate that no work of this size can ever be complete."

A drink
The same book also has an English-French section, so if you are looking for *boissons sans alcool* you can ask for shandy (*panache*) or soda water (*l'eau au siphon*).

A week from now ...
... the final preparations will be under way at St Helier's markets for Jersey's Good Food Festival Fair, which takes place on Sunday at the climax of the annual festival. Antony Worrall Thompson will be opening the event at 11am.

Pagnol's patch

Town of anchovies and illusions

In Chiavari on the Italian Riviera you start to wonder what continent you're in, writes Michael Delahaye

As with all the best discoveries, we came upon Chiavari by chance, late one evening en route from Bordeaux to Florence. It was 8pm and we'd been driving for 12 hours. Our little hire car was protesting – and here we were, just past the French-Italian border and facing the interminable string of tunnels that punctuate the autostrada of the Ligurian Riviera.

We needed to eat and sleep. But where? The only names that stood out on the map were Genoa, La Spezia and San Remo – a choice between a port, a naval base and a song festival. Scanning more closely, my eye focused on a seaside place I had never heard of and, as it turned out, couldn't even pronounce: Chiavari (the accent is on the second syllable: key-ah-va-ree – important, as otherwise it can be confused with the verb meaning to have sex).

Along its front, Chiavari is an unremarkable Mediterranean resort with perhaps a tad more timbre than most. The water and the beaches are scrupulously clean and – a boon for those with small children – the swimming areas are enclosed by low breakwaters of boulders that still allow the sea to circulate. (Rather less suitable for small children is some of the amorous nocturnal activity here, involving the local adolescents.)

If you want to stay on the front there's a fair choice of two- and three-star hotels. Our room in an unpretentious three-star establishment – with en suite bathroom, breakfast and parking – cost just 80,000 lire (about £30). And there was the bonus of waking up to the weather forecast on RAI-1, given in full military fig by one Captain Paolo Capizzi – no doubt of the Carabinieri Cloudbusters Brigade. In Italy the weather is too important to leave to civilians.

But what really justifies at least a stop-over is what you may never find unless you walk 100 metres away from the front, under the railway line. Behind it lies the old town. The atmosphere is a mix of Italian and, bizarrely, South American. The streets have names such as Corso Montevideo; there are huge white churches and consulates for Peru, Chile and Uruguay. When you spot an old gentleman in a linen suit doffing his panama, you start seriously to wonder which continent you're in.

The explanation is that towards the end of the last century, many of the town's sons emigrated to South America, made their fortunes and either came back themselves or sent their money back. The blend of architecture that resulted can make you gasp or laugh.

Take five minutes to inspect the *palazzina* along the Corso Mollo. Even Italy doesn't offer many chances to see peach plasterwork with terracotta embellishments and turquoise shutters – on the one building.

Now take a right turn off the Corso Mollo into the commercial centre of the old town and, a second time, you start to wonder whether you've stumbled on to the back lot of a film studio. What from a distance look like ordinary architectural features – carved stone, pointed brickwork, protruding sills – turn out to be painted illusions. The technique – *finta architettura* – started in the 17th century as a cheap way for the average Chiavarese to tart up his modestly plastered pile. In spirit, it wasn't so different from the penchant of today's DIY enthusiasts for taping instant leaded lights to their double-glazing. Down the centuries, the effect in Chiavari has been to make even the relatively recent look instantly old.

The town's undoubted wealth is reflected in the quality of the shops. Old money never dies here; it just turns over. If you have a weakness for designer kitchenware, if names such as Guzzini and Alessi make you weak in the wallet, prepare to shed your lire. And remember: the great thing about any Italian gadget – a Parmesan grater, a cappuccino foamer or a humble orange squeezer – is that, if you get bored looking at it, you can always use it.

Predictably, the local culinary specialties are fish based. For a taste of the best at around £15 a head, try the *Creuza de Mar* in the Piazza Cademartori. The fresh anchovies in oil and the clam spaghetti make excellent starters, particularly when sluiced down with the tangy Sardinian house white. And, if you really want to impress your fellow diners, pat your lips and murmur: *"Siamo nati per soffrire"* – we're born to suffer.

But if, on the day you leave, you just want to pack something snackable for the journey, do what we did: go along to one of the bakers in the Via Martiri della Liberazione, buy a large tile of freshly baked focaccia (the flat, dimpled bread made with olive oil) and then walk along to the Bottega del Formaggio at No 208, where Gianni or Mauro will fill it with cheese and prosciutto. Chiavari is that sort of place.

The nearest airport to Chiavari is Genoa. The only airline with flights there from Britain is British Airways (0345 222111), daily from Gatwick. A World Offer fare has just expired, which means you can expect to pay around £200 return. You may do better to fly to Milan, which is about 100 minutes and £10 away by train. See 48 Hours in Milan (p 8) for details of flights there.

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The Provençal landscape immortalised by Marcel Pagnol remains frozen in time. By Ray Kershaw

So there it is, that fateful fountain, in the heart of La Treille, the real Bastides Blanches village of Jean de Florette. Today, though, it's not running. It would be romantic to think that Manon is up to her tricks again, but a kindly old gentleman explains from his shade that it's simply because the pipes are too old.

The fountain, of course, is what everyone remembers, where everyone comes first, and we're surprised there hasn't been a bit of timely plumbing. But then, La Treille takes its role as Provence's most famous village with a negligent detachment. Nowhere can you see the name of Pagnol. There are no shops, no souvenirs, no longer a café. There is not even – be warned – a public lavatory.

It's not that the residents wish you hadn't come. It's just that they're still a real community. In the shade of the plane trees outside the Republican Club, the men of the village still gather to play boules as they might have done in Manon's time. And, with true rural hospitality, twice while we're there ladies come to their doors to ask whether we need water.

There's a bus park today at the bottom of the hill, and a few commuter villas that make rich targets for burglars from Marseilles. But the village remains much as Pagnol depicted it in the opening paragraphs of *Jean de Florette*: under terracotta tiles huddled among cobbled squares and alleyways, sheltering from the sun and the bite of the mistral. The single road soon peters out into the high garrigue, the wild Provençal countryside that is woven into all his books and films. The literary geography of few other writers can correspond so closely with that of his life.

Marcel Pagnol was born in Aubagne, the bustling little market town just down the hill. Totally Provençal, cheerfully unglamorous, it is famous for its *santons* – ceramic figurines – and for being the headquarters of the French Foreign Legion. And although Marcel was only two when his schoolmaster father transferred the family the dozen miles to Marseilles, Aubagne sees itself increasingly as the gateway to Pagnol land. The tourist office gets an average of 100 inquiries a day, from places as distant as China and Japan.

A few steps along the boulevard, The Little World of Pagnol is on its way to becoming the town's principal attraction. As well as memorabilia, it boasts an animated diorama of those ceramic *figurines* whose faces unmistakably belong to Yves Montand and Gérard Depardieu – those stars of the Claude Berri films. Though crowded with school kids, it proves less tacky than we fear. And, as with much else in Aubagne, we can't grumble at the cost – entrance is free.

But up behind La Treille, between the triangle of limestone peaks forming the Massif de

mary! It's like Zola's paradise. It's more beautiful than paradise!"

Overgrown with clematis, the place still has a vaguely ramshackle look, though peering over from the olive grove we discover a new swimming-pool in the back yard. Then comes the garrigue, dense with aromatic herbs, cut by deep ravines. And somewhere it's all up there: Manon's cave, the hidden springs, the Vallon of Passetemps where Marcel's father won his glory, the cave of Grosibon on the summit of Thoume where Marcel and Lili, the peasant boy who

From our windy eyrie, two kilometres above a pocket-sized Marseilles, M del Rosso points out the sites of Pagnol's life. He ought to know. He says he worked as an extra in the films. In the following days, wherever we go, in caves, in lonely valleys, we seem fated to meet M Louis. Although he has no English, his exuberance alone must be well worth his fee.

Occasionally you meet other bands of Pagnol pilgrims, but the atmospheric landscape hides a hundred secret places. Among the herbs and the wild flowers, there is sometimes a sense of walking with ghosts. On a bare stretch of garrigue we come upon a ruined hut, haunted by Marcel's younger brother Paul. While Marcel's love of the hills made him a writer Paul fulfilled his by becoming a goatherd, living in this hut with his harmonica for company. Now only the foundations remain, with wild roses growing among the rubble. He died at 34 from a tumour of the brain – another heartbreak for Marcel, who felt the force of destiny, cruel and benign, so often in his life. Paul was almost certainly his model for Manon.

Pagnol now lies in the little cemetery just down the hill from the famous open aqueduct that flows through the book and film of *My Mother's Château*. There are many flowers on the grave, and we read a note written in English: "Thank you, Marcel, for the joy that you gave us." I've brought a few carnations. That seems the most appropriate. But my wife's been picking wild flowers from the hills. She thought he'd like those best.

Easynet (0990 292929) has flights from Luton and Liverpool to Nice starting at £98 return, but as the summer peak and World Cup approach seats at this price are scarce. (The most reliable economical choice is to use Eurostar (0345 303030) from London Waterloo, changing at Paris or Lille for a direct service to Avignon. The journey time is about nine hours, and the fare is £119 return. The French Travel Centre in the UK is at 178 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AL (0891 244123, a premium-rate number). The Cadogan Guide to Provence (£14.99) is handy.



Lavender cultivation in Provence, above, and Daniel Auteuil and Yves Montand, left, in 'Jean de Florette'. Photographs: Herbert Kranawetter/Bruce Coleman; The Ronald Grant Archive (left)

L'Etoile, the real Pagnol's Provence exists virtually unchanged. Carpeted with rosemary, lavender, thyme, it's so exactly like the books and films that it looks delightfully familiar. A map from the tourist office shows the directions, but we find that the best guidebooks are the autobiographies that let Pagnol himself bring it all to life.

La Bastide Neuve is the old farmhouse of his childhood summer holidays that was his lifelong idea of heaven on earth. He was later to make it the home of Jean de Florette. "Look!" cried the lunchback. "Just see those giant brambles, that tangle of olive trees, bushes of rose-

taught him the secrets of the hills, met the fearsome eagle owl while sheltering from a storm.

We have the wild landscape to ourselves. The only sounds in the hot silence are the chirping of cicadas and the drone of insects. But as we struggle to the summit of La Grande Tête Rouge, long before we see him we catch the animated oratory of M Louis del Rosso. He is not only, he tells us, the best Pagnol Country guide; he's also the president of the Pagnol Association. He is leading two Swiss tourists, who are getting as much fun from his ebullient eccentricity as from their guided tour itself.



Not just sleepers on this line, from Monday, day-trippers can travel on the West Highland Line from Edinburgh to Fort William for £20 return. Photograph: Chris Bacon

The golden age of the iron horse

Why not take advantage of the special deals being offered by competing private rail companies? Simon Calder shows how

Last weekend was the time to enjoy rail travel at its best. As the May sunshine dazzled from the bright steel rails, I lounged while the countryside raced energetically past. Early summer, I reflected, is ideal for using this most civilised form of transport—especially at fares that seem improbably low.

You won't be surprised to learn that this exercise in contentment took place not in Britain but in Italy, where an extensive, accessible rail system is regarded as a matter for national pride. But whatever your view on the wisdom or otherwise of rail privatisation, the arrival tomorrow of the summer timetable will give the traveller more options than at any time since the Sixties. Not only has the desecration of UK railways begun by Dr Beeching finally begun to be reversed, with places such as Blackpool, Ramsgate and Shrewsbury returning to the InterCity network; the train operators are also creating some imaginative fares for rail travellers.

Keep on the *Independent* track, and you can take a 1,000-mile grand tour of England and Scotland for less than £80, subject to a bit of advance planning. Start from Birmingham, where much of the rail action is taking place. You can travel from Birmingham to Edinburgh for £30 return. Elegantly, this fare allows you to use two entirely distinct routes: north on the West Coast line, south on the East Coast.

After the northward rush through Staffordshire, Cheshire and Lancashire, the Lake District flashes past to the west. Later, the climb to Shap summit and the race through the borders from Carlisle are among the most

dramatic stretches of track in Britain. From Edinburgh you can plug into the ScotRail network which, from Monday, will offer a great day out. A special carriage is being attached to the West Highland Line sleeper at Edinburgh for a £20 return ride. The departure time is a bright-and-early 5.05am, but it gets you to Fort William at 10.25am in time for a hearty nine-hour hike. This summer, too, bikes will travel free on all ScotRail services.

The trip south from Edinburgh arcs east in a neat counterpart to the westerly trip north, sweeping you close to the Northumbrian coast and past the *Angel of the North* near Gateshead before swooping around Durham. Don't travel back to Birmingham just yet; abandon your journey at York. Show your rail ticket at the tourist office first, and you get vouchers for half-price admission to the National Railway Museum and many other attractions.

York to Pontefract defeated me. I can see no alternative to a standard single costing £4.90 for the 15-mile journey. But it gets you safely across the border into West Yorkshire, where suddenly fares fall to near-Italian levels. A Day Ranger ticket costs £4.40 and entitles up to three adults to travel anywhere in the county by train or bus (after 9.30am on weekdays, any time at weekends).

This dream ticket will ease you as quickly or slowly as you like between Pontefract and Wakefield, where you have a baffling choice of fares on the fast-track GNER train to London. The range of tickets to King's Cross

is more complicated than ever it was under British Rail. At the top end, the full one-way fare is £52.50; next a SuperSaver single £48; an Apex single £28.50. Crafty one-way travellers will instead buy a day return, price £22, and throw away the inbound half. Cheapest of all is the new evening ticket, which begins on 1 June. The "After Eight" ticket allows a single journey departing after 8pm for £12 anywhere on the GNER network—which could be a journey as long as the 438 miles between Motherwell and King's Cross.

Once in London you find all kinds of special deals, such as the Thameslink offer, tomorrow only, allowing unlimited travel between Bedford and Brighton for £1; to qualify, you must buy the ticket today.

Returning from the capital to Birmingham allows you to benefit from the most tangible piece of competition so far. Chiltern Trains, which runs from Marylebone via Banbury to Birmingham, and Silverlink (from Euston via Northampton) are both aggressively chasing Virgin's main line route. As a result, Richard Branson's company is offering a silly price for a 120-mile journey even at peak times: just £7, if you book a Virgin Value ticket by 6pm the day before.

The best bargain of all cannot be found in England, Wales or Scotland: tomorrow, and on any other Sunday, rail travellers in Northern Ireland can roam the length and breadth of the province for just £3.

SKEGNESS

IS SO BRACING

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Skegness, or any LNER Enquiry Office.

CROSSED LINES

If you have seen a figure scavenging furiously around station platforms and booking offices in the past few weeks, it was probably me. Trying to find out what rail deals are around is an exercise as frustrating as a stalled train. Most of the bargains here were picked up from posters and pamphlets in the stations themselves.

For schedule and fare information, every train operator's automated phone system refers you to the National Rail Enquiry number, 0345 484950.

In my experience, the chances of receiving sensible, accurate information from this source for any remotely complicated journey are minimal.

The reason seems to be the way that the system is set up. Your call is diverted to one of several call centres around Britain. Some of these are run by train operating companies, who are not always assiduous about giving helpful advice about rivals' services. Others are run by telephone companies whose staff need not ever have been near a train.

An example of how even a simple request can be mishandled:

on Wednesday this week, I called to ask the time of a train from London Waterloo to Bath. The subsequent conversation went like this:

"From Waterloo?"
"Yes, please."
"To Bath?"
"Yes, please."
"I've got nothing from Waterloo—all the trains for Bath go from Paddington."

Wales & West, which runs trains daily from Waterloo to Bath and beyond, pays thousands of pounds each year for a telephone service that diverts potential customers to its rival, Great Western Trains.

The next question, to a different operator, was about a ScotRail promotion on Sundays giving a 50 per cent reduction to anyone travelling with a child. I checked on a specific journey from Edinburgh to Aberdeen. That it was not going to be a productive conversation became evident almost immediately:

"Aberdeen. Hmm. Is that A-B-E-R...?" Twenty minutes later, via a ScotRail operator based in Newcastle, I finally got the information I needed.

No wonder motoring is so popular. SC

Rail to runway

Gatwick has the best rail links of any UK airport. From Monday, Thameslink will get you there from London Bridge in an impressive 26 minutes, eclipsing the Gatwick Express. But the new rail timetable shows the others catching up fast.

Startled, from where Go started flights yesterday, used to be served by one train a day from Birmingham; somewhat inconveniently, it arrived after all the flights had left. From Monday, hourly services will connect the Essex airport with Cambridge, Leicester and Birmingham.

East Midlands airport, fearfully difficult to reach without a car, last Monday finally achieved a regular bus link with the nearest station, Loughborough. Travellers were previously assured that such a link existed, even though it didn't. Anyone reading the new timetable and planning to catch the 9.54am from Brighton to Luton airport will be unamused when it sails straight through the yet-to-be-completed station; the £12m project should be ready some time this summer.

More ghost trains appear in the Heathrow Express timetable, which promises 15-minute links from London Paddington to Terminals 1, 2

and 3 (Terminal 4 is six minutes farther on). The service is not due to be opened until a month from today; currently travellers are required to take a rail/bus connection. In the arcane world of those who are riveted by the subject of rail-air links, rumours are circulating that trains will be running to and from the airport before then.

After Tony Blair conducts the opening ceremony on 23 June, the Heathrow Express will become easily the most expensive railway in Britain. The second-class fare is £10, working out at 67 pence a mile—more than twice the rate on the next most expensive, the Gatwick Express.

Not every train operator sees air passengers as easy money, though. For the same £10, you can travel all the way from Euston to Manchester airport on North Western Trains—nearly 200 miles. The absurdly good-value new direct train could mean the North's leading airport steals passengers from its rivals in the South-east.

The worst rail-air link in Britain, and the world, remains the one to Teesside airport. If you've missed the 10.17am train there from Darlington this morning, you must wait a week for the next one.

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Island at the end of the world

St John the Theologian went to Patmos to write Revelations. And if you can find a ferryboat to brave the storms of the Aegean, you can go there too, writes Jill Dudley

Patmos, the northernmost island of the Dodecanese in the Aegean Sea, is where St John was exiled, and where the Book of Revelation was thought to have been written. It is not an island to be visited for its fish-and-chips and disco but for its great Monastery of St John the Theologian and its many churches.

The charm of Patmos is that there is no airport and, therefore, tourism is limited. A violent storm, and you find yourself suddenly marooned. To discover in the 20th century that modern technology cannot cope with all weather conditions and that no ferryboats are sailing is a surprisingly refreshing experience. For once you have time to spare.

To prepare yourself for Patmos by reading Revelations is to arrive seeing everything in poetic and symbolic terms. The sun shining on the window of the hydrofoil on its approach caused a rainbow ring, a positive halo, through which I first saw the monastery.

A halo? Nonsense. A defect in the glass. A full harvest moon that first night, partly hidden by streaks of dark cloud, reminded me of some ancient fresco of the Day of Judgement with devils of black cloud being scattered. Fanciful stuff - foul weather coming, obviously.

A bus every hour takes visitors from the port of Skala up the twisting road to Chora where the cluster of small, whitewashed houses prostrate themselves at the foot of the towering, crenellated fortress of the Monastery of St John the Theologian.

The monastery was founded by Osios (Holy) Christodoulos in 1088. He was responsible, too, for the small Chapel of St Anne at the holy grotto half-way up the hill between Skala and Chora, where St John first heard the word of God.

It is possible from Skala to walk up an ancient, paved mule track to the sacred grotto, which is today incorporated into the Monastery of the Apocalypse. Its buildings look like a cluster of mushrooms on the hillside. Steep steps take the visitor down into the Chapel of St Anne and the grotto itself. There visitors can see the triple fissure in the rock (symbolic of the Trinity, it is said) marking the spot from which the voice of God came. Sixteenth-century icons decorate the rock face and iron lamps hang before them. Polished brass railings surround the ledge or recess where St John had laid his head to sleep, or put his pen, or placed his hands in prayer.

Regrettably, on my first visit I felt only irritation at the number of heads blocking my view. A tour guide was shouting out information and it appeared to me gross that everyone seemed so willing to go mad with wonder.

On my second visit I was luckier and arrived to find a service just over and everybody pouring out. Only a few monks and priests were left inside the grotto and I sat alone in the adjoining Chapel of St Anne where I was able to see the ancient frescoes and the icons. Incense hung on the air. Suddenly the small group of ecclesiastics in the grotto lifted up their voices in a short harmonious chant. At last I, too, felt wonder.

It is, though, the great Monastery of St John on the hilltop that attracts most visitors. Through the entrance you pass into an arched, cobbled courtyard full of terracotta pots of flowers. Vaulted passageways and narrow stone steps lead to the refectory with its ancient wall paintings, to the kitchen with its beehive ovens, or up to the ramparts for a panoramic view of the island.

The monastery's museum contains a collection of monastic treasures: bejewelled crosses, chalices, rare illuminated manuscripts and Bibles. Exhibited also is a white marble plaque inscribed in ancient Greek declaring Patmos to be the loveliest island of the pagan goddess Artemis.

According to archaeological finds there were once many pagan temples on Patmos, suggesting that it was well populated in antiquity. On the site of the monastery itself stood a great temple of Artemis. In the fourth century AD it was replaced by a Christian church. Parts of both the temple and this early Christian building are incorporated into the present day entrance to the Katholikon (the main monastery church). Its cylindrical frescoed ceiling is supported by short, twisted marble columns.

Quite apart from the monastery, this is the place if it's old churches you want to see. There are more than 40 in nearby Chora. Most are locked against those tempted to make off with their small icons but the keys are available on request. Meanwhile, if you've had a surfeit of churches you can wander to the part of town where majestic houses with arched windows reveal a short period of Venetian influence.

To get away from churches altogether on Pat-



Bell tower at the Monastery of St John, where the Book of Revelation was thought to have been written. Photo: Robert Harding Picture Library

mos, there are tracks to be walked, coves to be explored and villages to visit. Lambi, for example, renowned for its rare coloured pebbles; or the beautiful bay of Kato Kampos with its tavernas serving fresh fish; or the wilder, isolated spot of St Nicholas Eudelos with its late-11th-century chapel (it is impossible to leave churches and history behind for long).

On the day I was there, black clouds were massing. Constant flashes of lightning on the horizon lit

up the sky and there were ominous rumblings of thunder. These forebodings and boomings seemed only to emphasise the warnings of Revelations of the imminent end of the world and the need to prepare for the life hereafter.

Meanwhile, however, it was life in the present that had to be wrestled with. How to get off Patmos? Would I miss the return flight from Athens? I rather hoped I would. Certainly when the storms finally abated and the small port of Skala came to

life again there was a feeling of excitement. But there was also one of profound regret that it was time to leave.

To reach Patmos, you could take a scheduled flight to Athens (see sample fares at the foot of page 2), get the bus to the port of Piraeus and take a ferry from there for around £15 each way. Alternatively, you could find a charter to Kos, Mykonos or even Rhodes, all of which are closer to Patmos.

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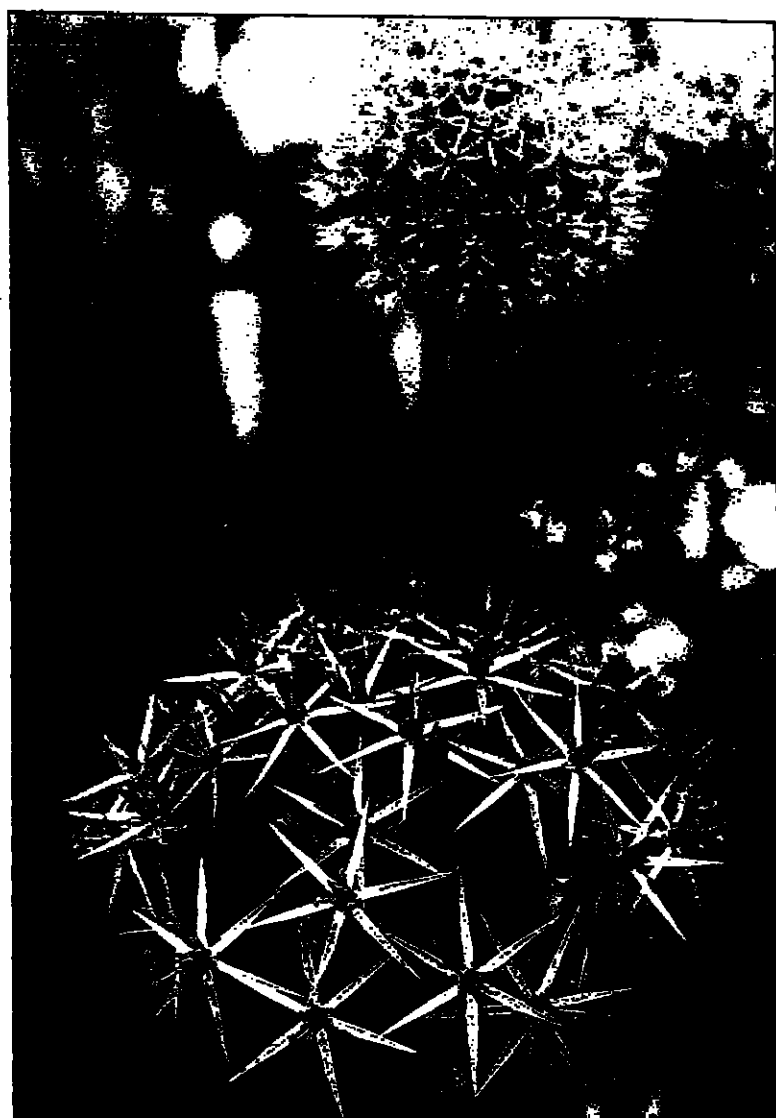
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11/GARDENING

Flowering tearjerker



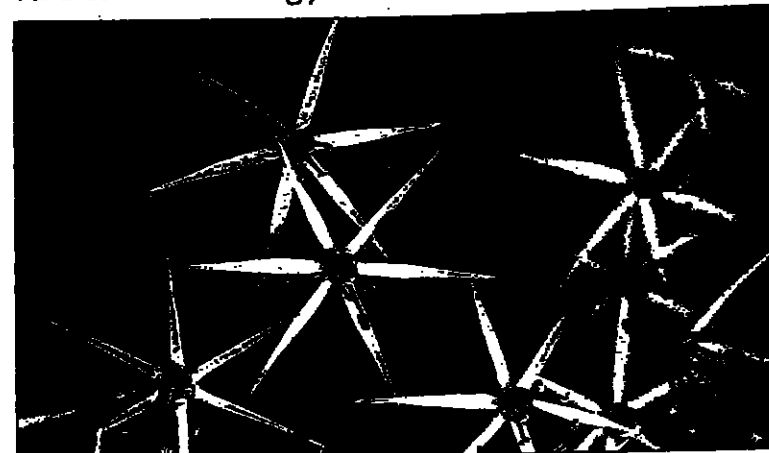
Decorative onions ("alliums" sounds so much better) are no strangers to the summer bulb catalogue. But it is curious that such handsome and easy-to-grow plants are seldom seen outside the photogenic gardens of the horticultural intelligentsia.

Summer-flowering bulbs have to shout pretty hard at this time of year. But most people who get round to thinking about alliums are put off by the foliage, which starts to look hideous even before the flowers have got going properly. You wouldn't enter an allium into a Beautiful Ankles competition. But the good news is that the flowers rise on long stems above the mess below. If you combine alliums with other plants that will hide the ugly leaves, this will allow the star-burst globes of purple, magenta or cream to float above a borrowed skirt of foliage.

I noticed this at the Chelsea Flower Show this week, in Fiona Lawrence's Chapel Garden for BSkyB, where the white orbs of allium 'Mount Everest' rose above the fat, glossy leaves of zantedeschia 'Green Goddess' surrounded by a fluffy tuft of *Tiarella grandiflora* and white dicerandas. And I have a clear memory of a previous Chelsea display where great thistly silver leaves of onopordium masked the origins of the gloves of *A. giganteum* that hung above them like purple moons. That was a simple idea which worked well – provided you're happy to have 6-ft. plants at the front of the border later on in the summer. (Why not? It might be fun to have some of the giants at the front for a change, rather than suffied away at the back.)

Alliums are well suited to dry conditions

Alliums – decorative onions – are splendid plants for the border, writes **Kirsty Fergusson**, but be sure to hide their ugly ankles



The star-burst globes of allium

Photographs: Nicola Kurtz

and are much used by advocates of natural gardening, in association with silver-leaved shrubs, grasses, sages, poppies and other cornfield annuals. *Althaea spaecephala* is an excellent candidate for this kind of looser, less structured planting: its flower heads are smaller than the great globes of the better known *A. giganteum* or *A. christophii* and more egg-shaped than round, in the deepest shade of magenta possible. Imagine them as they are at the celebrated Westpark in Munich, danc-

ing above a sea of lavender-blue sages, nepeta, feathery bluish-green *Stipa calamagrostis* with a scattering of moon daisies, poppies and corncockles.

In Beth Chatto's gravel garden you will find the rather shorter, stouter *Allium christophii* hiding its ankles in the deeply purple fringes of *Sedum maximum* 'Atropurpureum' and rubbing shoulders with a pale mauve tulbaghia and a mustard-flowered helianthus. Fluffy stipes echo the pinky-beige

stage of the alliums on the turn at the end of a dry summer.

In the wilder parts of my own (Dorset) garden, as well as our local roadside parks, I have been completely nonplussed by the way that nature has pulled off a master-stroke in the integration of alliums. In May the air is pungent with the scent of wild garlic, *Allium ursinum*, known around here as ramsons; the plants naturally mingle with bluebells – not at all usual in the wild – as well as yellow celandines, pink campion and the vivid green of young ferns uncurling on long stems. For two weeks in May, driving around the lanes is like taking a trip through a double herbaceous border. And then, for a day or two, the garlic leaves are noticeably awful – until the big bluebells take over and cover up the rotting leaves. Nobody in their right mind would plant the incredibly invasive wild garlic in a border, but I should think that a strategically placed allium would work to the same effect as the roadside umbellifers.


From midsummer onwards, the smaller species of allium with looser-packed, drooping flower heads can make a less showy entrance into the border. The little yellow *Allium moly*, originally from the mountains of Spain, does well with an accompaniment of *Euphorbia dulcis* 'Chameleon' and perhaps a silvery helping of stachys of lamium. There's a lovely native of California, *A. unifolium* (syn *murrayanum*) with large, pink flowers, which will expand to form a decent-sized clump over the years. It is well worth acquiring, and fun to combine with ... well, that's something you want to think about yourself.

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A light touch on furniture

The stuff of ... Scandinavian elegance. Sally Staples gets hooked on the Gustavian look

Step into the bright, light interior of Nordic Style and you feel the full impact of what is called the Gustavian effect. For the uninitiated this is a French-inspired Swedish version of neo-classical furniture and design. For example, the shape of the chairs calls to mind those in the Palace of Versailles, but instead of being upholstered in gilt and red plush they are painted white.

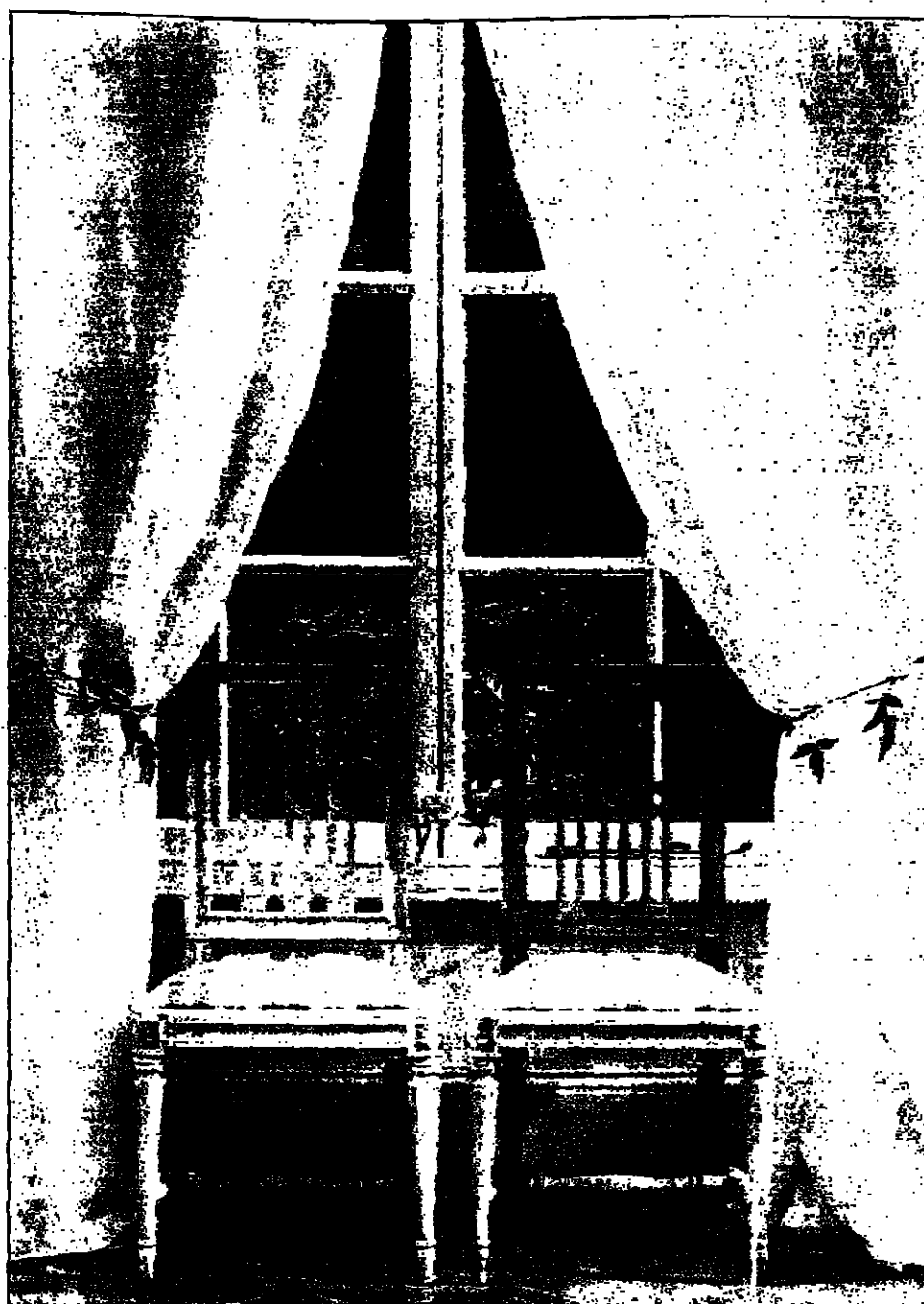
Moussie Sayers, who runs the shop, is a Swede whose watchwords are elegance and practicality. And so a set of medallion-shaped dining chairs each wear a decorative linen apron to protect the upholstery from those ruinous wipes of sticky fingers.

"We Swedish are practical," explains Moussie. "We like to protect our furniture with something that looks attractive." The great emphasis on light - both with the furniture and the shop - harks back to the original idea of brightening up the gloomy atmosphere engendered by those long, dark Scandinavian nights.

Displayed in the picture window is a six-seater dining-table (£995), painted and varnished in white, which comes with hand-carved chairs at £396 each (£525 for carvers). Above the table is a pewter candelabra that can double as a splendid vase, to be filled with flowers in summer.

Beds in beech or birch wood are upholstered in traditional Swedish designs, and Nordic Style sells embroidered bedlinen as well as traditional duvet covers. To reinforce the Nordic look you can buy matching bedside tables (£395), a chest of drawers (£595), wall mirrors (£250) and a headboard (£425) in the same style.

The concept of Nordic Style is to create the complete Scandinavian look, and there is a wide range of accessories to complement the furniture, including lampshades, candlestick holders and classic, hand-painted aquavit glasses (a set of six costs £180).



A breath of fresh air: the Gustavian look is pale, austere and elegant

Moussie also stocks pottery made by Jill Bernadotte, fabrics decorated with historical Swedish patterns, and a selection of chenille rugs (at £58 each) and washable cotton runners to protect staircases, sold by the length at £25 per metre. The shop is even a stock of Swedish children's stories (in translation) as well as books that teach Nordic Style.

Some beautifully restored pine furniture. A sideboard has a £2,600 price tag, a bureau bookcase costs £3,800 and antique Swedish floor clocks at £1,900 are "totally reliable if placed on an absolutely flat surface".

Nordic Style is at 109 Lots Road, London SW10 0RN (0171-351 1755), open Monday to Saturday from 9.30am-5.30pm

What's oval, hairy and back again?

A taste of ... kiwi fruit. The cannily renamed Chinese gooseberry was fashionable in the Eighties, became a byword for foodie naiffness, and is making a comeback, writes Nikki Spencer

During the Eighties and the thin days of *nouvelle cuisine*, in Britain we couldn't get enough of "kiwi fruit". They were everywhere, a bit like a Jonathan Ross of the food world. Whether a dish was sweet or savoury, it wasn't complete without a few strategically placed green slices. But, suddenly, we'd had too much and the fruit fell from favour.

Now, however, kiwis are making a comeback. It's generally accepted that we should forget about serving it with a julienne of this or a coulis of that and eat it simply. We should just slice the top off and serve it like a boiled egg, or bung it in bits into a fruit salad. The fruit may no longer be the epitome of cool but the fact is that in the last four years sales of it have increased by more than 50 per cent.

The Chinese gooseberry was initially grown in the Yangtze Valley. It was only at the turn of the century that vines were brought to New Zealand and it was discovered that the soil and climate were perfect for growing the fruit commercially.

Exports were insignificant until the Sixties, when a canny marketing executive renamed it "kiwi" because of its supposed similarity to the eggs of the native New Zealand bird. The fruit was aggressively marketed, and now more than 60 million trays are exported from the country every year, from June to late December. (The rest of the time the fruit is supplied mainly by Chile, Italy and North America.)

In New Zealand the primary growing area is the Bay of Plenty on the North Island. The small town of Te Puke, south east of Tauranga, is known as the kiwi capital of the world. Here, in the rich rural belt flanked by Papamoa Hills, the fertile soil produces the fruit in abundance. Not to miss a trick, growers have even created a horticultural theme park called Kiwifruit Country. Visitors can ride "Kiwikarts" (a sort of bus-cum-train) on a guided tour of the orchards and climb up a viewing tower shaped like a giant slice of the fruit.

Like pears, kiwi fruit are picked when they are hard. Harvesting is by hand and the pickers wear cotton gloves to make sure that the fruit isn't bruised, or the protective covering of hair rubbed off.

Provided they are kept cool, the fruit can then last for months, until warm air triggers the ripening process.

Kiwi culture
• Kiwifruit Country (00 64 7 573 6340) is on the main Rotorua to Tauranga Highway. It is open daily. As well as the tour and the tower experience, you can sample fruit wines and other specialties in the restaurant.

• New Zealand fruit (they're the ones with stickers saying Zespri) arrive in supermarkets in Britain over the next few weeks.

• A recent study by the Department of Food and Science and Nutrition at Rutgers University in New Jersey, US, found that gram for gram, kiwi fruit has more nutrients than any other popular fruit, followed by mango and papaya.



The green alternative: try eating the fruit with a spoon

GAMES

Around 30 years ago, a plastic box with some electronics inside appeared in the shops. You could plug it into your television set to produce an image of a white dot blipping from side to side on the screen. A controlling knob enabled you to slide a white line to and fro and try to get it to meet the dot before it rushed past. This was tennis for couch potatoes, and we loved it. Then came *Space Invaders*, when crudely shaped aliens twitched their way inexorably down the screen as we tried to shoot them down. We loved that too, but this was only the start of a new era in the history of games.

As computers became faster, the games became ever more complex. The advent of CD-Rom drives and multimedia systems has let them take the last giant step for gamelands - to a land of sex, violence and creative ingenuity now available at a budget price in the new "Premier Collection" range from Eidos, which has disastrously interfered with my sleeping and working schedule in the past week.

On the boxes of such games, it has become conventional to rate the games according to their suitability for different age groups, whether they are one-player or two-player, DOS or Windows, and joystick or mouse. What they need as well is a rating for sex, violence and anorak thickness.

SEX, VIOLENCE AND A GOOD DEAL OF FUN WILLIAM HARTSTON REVIEWS COMPUTER GAMES

Championship Manager 2 is a no-sex, low violence, high-anorak game for football fanatics. If your idea of a nice evening at home is to spend your time picking football teams ("including season 96/97 updates, English, Scottish and Italian Leagues"), buy and sell players, and conduct fantasy matches, then this is the game for you. I did not get as far as a game of football, because I found the business of team selection and transfers so tedious. To judge, however, from the number of people who were stomping through Highbury last Saturday chanting "Ar-se-nor-ori, two ni-il", there are people who might enjoy this sort of thing.

I suppose much the same applies to *Links LS* the computer golf game (Alt-S for a straight swing, Alt-D to hook the ball slightly to the left, and Alt-F to slice the ball to the right are among the options). Unfortunately this required more RAM than my feeble machine could offer. That's a good thing to check before buying anything of this type.

For real computer gamers, who don't want just to pretend they are playing golf or football, there is a wide choice. Try *Under a Killing Moon* (sex and violence moderate, anorak small) if you fancy your skills as a private detective. You can talk to the characters, offer bribes to them, and get killed by

them if you're unlucky. I found it difficult to get the hang of the instructions. Over-complexity is always a potential problem in such games.

Duke Nukem (alien sex high, violence very high, blood and gore terrifying) is the adults-only version of other shoot-'em-up games. You control the good guy in a post-apocalyptic alien invasion scenario; and if you can work out where your spare ammo and health packs are lurking, then survive the attacks on you by any number of disgusting-looking aliens, it's a lot of fun for anyone with latent psychopathic tendencies. I enjoyed it, anyway.

Finally, there is *Tomb Raider* (original game plus four extra levels of "Unfinished Business"). For anyone who has not sampled the delights of the heroine Lara Croft, or heard her delicious grunts as she climbs obstacles or gets bitten by wolves, this will come as a revelation. Utterly addictive and beautifully designed, with problems to be solved at every stage that are just difficult enough to challenge without being too frustrating, *Tomb Raider* (high sex, high violence, anorak optional) is quite simply the best game there has ever been in the entire world - until the next one comes along.

All games mentioned in the *Eidos Premier Collection* £12.99 each, except *Tomb Raider* £14.99.

PANDORA MELLY GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Matthew Fort, 51, writer on food and drink

I used to like games that involved a lot of running around. For years, it was a means of keeping the inevitable side-effects of my passion for food at bay.

I played cricket for the village of Twyford as an off-spin bowler of the master-of-flight school, and I was the most consistent batsman in the side, holding down the number 11 slot for about 10 years. At one point, I went through a series of nine or ten consecutive ducks, and, when I finally managed a run, to hear the cheer that went up you would have thought I'd scored a century.

The other glorious moment was back in 1966 when I spent the summer in Italy, in the Abruzzi. That was the year in which England won the World Cup, and it became *bella figura* to have an Englishman playing on your local team. I turned out a few times for the village of Licenza, near where my uncle lives, and the fact that I was a

hopelessly incompetent football player - mattered nothing to them.

The needle match of the year in Licenza was the marrieds versus the bachelors, played on a pitch on which there was not a single blade of grass, although there were several stones roughly the same size and shape as the ball. I scored the winning goal for the unmarrieds, which I have to say was entirely fortuitous, as the ball bounced off my knee and over the prostrate body of the goalkeeper while I stood wondering what on earth was going on.

I don't play games now at all, although there are people who consider that what I do for a living is a game. They simply don't understand what a fantastically demanding job we food writers have, for which we train every day, round about lunchtime.

Matthew Fort's book *Paul Heathcote's Rhubarb and Black Pudding*, a journal of a year in the kitchen of Lancashire's star chef, will be published by Fourth Estate in September.

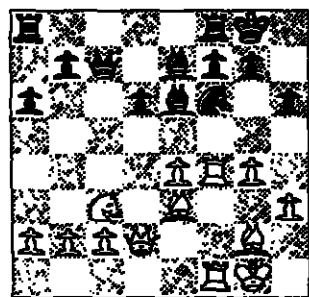
CHESS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

It has been a strange and exciting week in the world of chess. The excitement came in Madrid, where Viswanathan Anand was in fine form and edged his rating within range of the 2,800 mark, above which only Kasparov lives.

The strangeness came from Kasparov himself, who gave a virtuoso show-off performance by beating the entire Israeli team in a clock simultaneous display. Playing against four top grandmasters, with his clocks running on all four boards at the same time, he scored two draws and two wins (though agreeing a quick draw on top board to allow more time for the other games was a bit sneaky). The puzzle, though, is why four top grandmasters set themselves up for such a humiliating experience.

Both the above events produced fine games, but the most attractive win of the week came in a match in the Netherlands between the veteran Dutch grandmaster Jan Timman and their most promising player of the younger generation, Loek van Wely. After seven games of the 10-game encounter, van Wely led by two points, but Timman fought back to end with honours even at 5-5.

Timman's equalising win was the best game of the match. The idea of a quick h3 and g4 in similar Sicilian lines is well known but not considered particularly dangerous, but in this



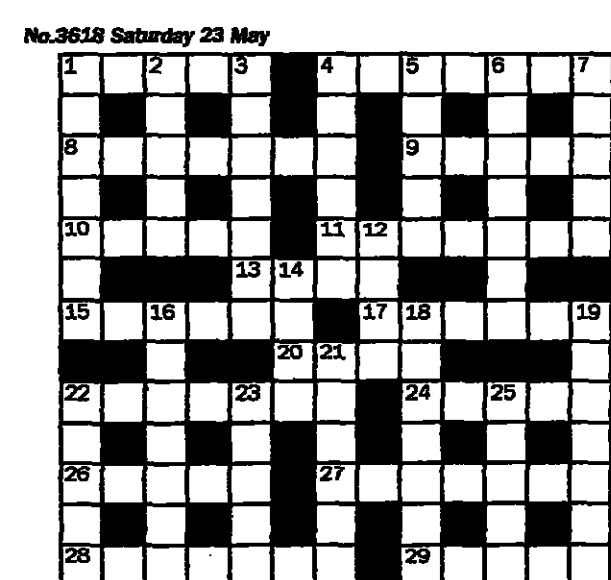
position, with Be3 and Nc6 already played, Black had no way to steer for positions known to be safe.

Just as van Wely was settling down to a strategically complex middlegame, he must have been startled by Timman's double exchange sacrifice. In the diagram position Timman played 16.Rxf6! Bxf6 17.Rxf6! gxf6 18.Qf2 Kg7 19.e5!! and there was no defence. After 20.Bxf6+ Kxf6 21.Qf6+ Kh7 22.Be4+ Kg8 23.Qg5+ White forces mate, and in the final position, Black can do nothing against Qg5+ or Qh5+.

A spirited performance by the 47-year-old Timman.

White: Jan Timman
Black: Loek van Wely
1 e4 c5 12 Qxd4 c5
2 Nf3 d6 13 Qd2 exd4
3 d4 cxd4 14 Rxf4 Be6
4 Nxd4 Nf6 15 Rxf1 0-0
5 Nc3 a6 16 Rxf6 Bxf6
6 Be3 Nc6 17 Rxf6 gxf6
7 h3 c6 18 Qf2 Kg7
8 g4 Be7 19 e5 fxc5
9 Bg2 h6 20 Bxf6+ Kg6
10 f4 Qc7 21 Qb4 resigns
11 0-0 Nxd4

CONCISE CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- Pierced (5)
 - Span rapidly around (7)
 - Worry (7)
 - Chasm (5)
 - Bitter (7)
 - Situated (7)
 - Paradise (4)
 - Motor (6)
 - Rush headlong (6)
 - Water-jug (4)
 - Harsh (7)
 - Religious groups (5)
 - University sportsman (5)
 - Garden feature (7)
 - Warm air current (7)
 - Belgian city (5)
- DOWN**
- 10,000 square metres (7)
 - Passenger ship (5)
 - German city (7)
 - Shellfish (6)
 - OT patriarch (5)
 - Set of baby clothes (7)
 - Given medicine (5)
 - Formerly (4)
 - Ruminant animals (4)
 - Hand movement (7)
 - Munitions store (7)
 - Settle (7)
 - Small carnivore (6)
 - Head of monastery (5)
 - Surrey racecourse (5)
 - Offence (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 1 Loo, 3 Stork (Loose talk), 7 Ambience, 8 Veal, 9 Self-employed, 10 Impair, 12 Mincey, 14 Sheath knives, 18 Biro, 19 Beestroot, 20 Inset, 21 Odd, DOWN: 1 Lump sum, 2 Oriol, 3 Sheep, 4 Obvious, 5 Knave, 6 Endear, 12 Amazons, 12 Miner, 13 Respond, 15 Haiti, 16 Habit, 17 Virgo.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

Game all; dealer South	
North	South
♠K42	♠Q9863
♥AK52	♥864
♦86	♦AKQJ
♣Q532	♣10

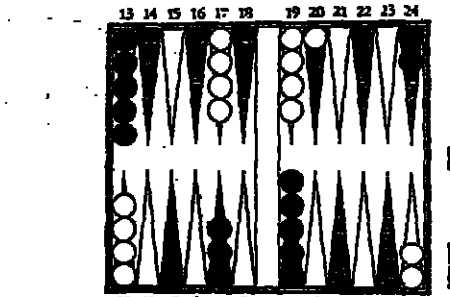
The North-South bidding on this deal was not entirely convincing but there was certainly a play for the spade game that they reached. There was, however, an interesting line that declarer overlooked and, playing routinely, he went one down.

South opened One Spade and North responded Two Clubs (Two Hearts would have suggested a five-card suit). South rebid Two Diamonds and North dithered. Four Spades, Two hearts and Two-No-trumps were all possibilities, but he finally chose the slight underbid of Three Spades. With little excuse except the lure of a vulnerable game, South went on to Four Spades and West led ♠J to dummy's ace.

Declarer started with a low spade from dummy, on which East played a slightly deceptive jack. South's queen won, but the next round of trumps was not a success: East drew dummy's remaining trumps and the defenders came to a heart and a club as well.

Well, what thoughts do you have about the play? With a trump suit combination such as this, it is usually better to start with a low card from one hand or the other, but here ♠K from dummy at trick two would have been a better play; east would probably win and play a second heart. The South can cash ♠Q and play on diamonds, discarding two hearts from the dummy. This way, the defence would make just two spades and a club. The point is that South wants to play just two rounds of trumps without risking the defenders playing a third.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



What could be simpler? Your opponent has opened with a 51 and played 13/8, 6/5. You now roll 32. How should you play it?

Let's remind ourselves of what we are trying to do in the opening. First, we would like to make some new points (this is why 31, 42, 53 and 61 are such good opening rolls). Second, if we can't make a point naturally then we can slot a good point, hence White's play of 6/5 as part of his opening. Third, we would like either to split or advance the back men. 6/5 is a very strong opening roll because it enables you to bring one of your back men to the safety of the mid-point.

Finally, failing any of the above we can create builders for new points, for example by playing a roll of 43 by moving 13/9, 13/10.

When you win the opening roll, you can dictate the style of game. When your opponent plays first you must adapt to his opening, but there are still normally several choices and you can choose the one that best suits your style. In the above position 13/10, 24/22; 13/10, 13/11; 24/21, 13/11; 24/21, 24/22; 13/10, 6/4 are all reasonable plays.

I believe that the counter-slotting play 13/10, 6/4 is best by a small margin. It gives White four great numbers (11,33,31,13), but other than those Black is more likely to be able to equalise the position quickly than with the other plays.

This counter-slotting idea is one that recurs frequently in the opening whenever the first player slots with a 1. It is particularly strong against an opening 51 because White does not create any new cover numbers for his slot with his 5, but it also works well against 21 and 41. Try it; I think you will be impressed by the results.

Pieces of silver

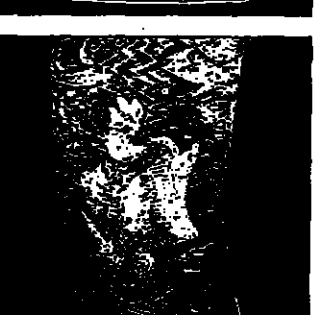
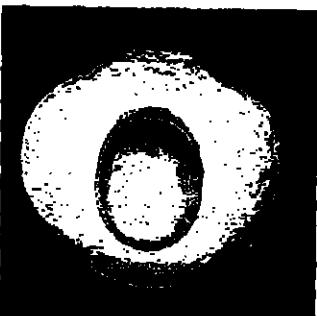
Need a door-knob? No? An engraved bowl? That's more like it.
Claire Gervat talks to a master silversmith

Malcolm Appleby works magic with metal. Engraving, jewellery-making, carving – it would be inappropriate to call him simply a silversmith. And life is becoming increasingly hectic. Not only is he "going non-stop", as he puts it, with extra commissions because of the millennium, he has also become a father. Even now, he's busily designing a gold bangle for little May, which naturally he's decorating with tiny flowers.

On his CV Malcolm describes his field of work as "decorative and functional ironwork; jewellery; medals; prints; engraving on guns". This last area was in fact his first; he studied engraving at art college, and was apprenticed to a London gunsmith, John Wilkes. Then curiosity prompted him to broaden his scope. "My eyes were all around looking at everything, so I gradually became involved in jewellery and silverware, and now I use a lot of iron and gold. I like to think of myself as an engraver rather than a silversmith, but there's nothing I like doing better than designing something with absolutely no engraving on it at all."

What that means, in effect, is that Malcolm's clients have commissioned him for a wide range of projects. For example, one woman who had bought his silver and gold pieces in the past approached him to make her a magnificent door-knocker. "It's blacksmithed out of iron, then I've carved it and fired gold over the surface, which is what gives it all that rich colouring." It's also what makes it not a little expensive, and Malcolm admits that something similar would set you back around £10,000.

Yet he's quick to point out that not everything he makes is so expensive; prices start at £8 for silver buttons. Not that the cost deters people from starting, and then enlarging, their collections of Applebyware. "I've made a lot of large silver bowls for the table. One client has a whole series of large silver leaves – and when I say large I mean massive – that go down the centre of the table."



Malcolm Appleby's pieces combine engraving, ironwork and carving

Some customers have strong ideas about what they want, but this is not essential. Many of his commissioned works are based on something he has done before; a small geranium-leaf plate inspired the series of leaves, for instance. "And I make up pieces for the fun of it and that often stimulates clients to follow that direction, or think in a similar way and adapt my ideas." Or you could just adapt your way of living to his ideas, like the couple who moved to a smarter house because they thought their fine new silver bowls made the old place look shabby.

Malcolm's customer base is as varied as his work, including monied landowners, people in camper vans and old school friends who just happen to be passing his house in Scotland. Other clients include the board of trustees at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, for whom he made a seal which Sir Roy Strong, then the director, called "probably one of the most vulgar pieces we have in the museum, and I mean that as a compliment".

Currently he's doing a series of production pieces for a London-based company, and he also has an important exhibition coming up later in the year at Aberdeen Art Gallery. He classes himself, with his tongue firmly in his cheek, as a "multi-media post-post-modern maximalist with minimalist overtones".

"You must get that in," he says, trying to hold back a chuckle, "with three 'post', because I noticed in some trendy crafts magazine that someone had two, in all seriousness."

And then he went off to finish that all-important bangle.

Malcolm Appleby can be contacted at Aulbeg, Grandully, By Aberfeldy, Perthshire (01330 844642). His one-man exhibition, "30 Years", will be at the Aberdeen Art Gallery from 10 October to 21 November. For more information, call Christine Rew on 01224 646333.



Sweet smells for healing hands

"You've heard of the Reduced Shakespeare Company, who introduce you to Shakespeare's plays in two and a half hours? Well, this is the Reduced Aromatherapy Company," began our tutor Lorna, on our one-day course at the Clare Maxwell-Hudson School. The agenda was to look at the plant fragrances (essential oils) and the way they work. Finally we would have a go at prescribing and mixing our own scented massage oils.

This game-plan seemed to meet the requirements of the assortment of people on the course. Some, like me, wanted to learn the basics for use at home; others were considering taking up aromatherapy as a profession. Taeko Arai from Japan, who is working as a midwife, was particularly interested in aromatherapy for mother and baby. Fiona Stoppard is about to start a massage diploma course, from which she hopes to earn a living. Since aromatherapy uses massage as one of its most effective tools she wanted to get a good grounding in the subject.

In the wake of the recent antibiotic scare, it did seem particularly appropriate to be attending the course. "The best recipe for health is to apply sweet scents to the brain," said the Classical Greek poet Anacreon. Smell, of all the senses, has the most direct connection to the limbic section of the brain, a part associated with memories, arousal and emotion. So the fragrant oils can have a significant effect on mood and mental state. They are also absorbed through the skin. Many of them have antiseptic qualities as well as analgesic, antiviral and anti-inflammatory effects, said Lorna. They are distilled from plants and are in fact not oily at all, but are called "oils" because they float on water.

Lorna took us through the different ways in which the essential oils can be used. The most obvious is massage, prepared by adding a few drops to a carrier such as almond or apricot oil. Alternatively they can be diluted in water to spray around the room, or wafted by the use of a vaporiser. You could add a few drops to bath water or use the oil in an inhalation. For administering to a localised area, dilute in water and then apply as a compress. A few of the oils have a beneficial effect when used neat on the skin, but they are strong and so should be used with care.

We next moved on to smelling some oils. Lorna passed each of us a thin strip of paper dotted with a blob of oil and we fanned it in front of our noses, shut our eyes and were then asked to describe the scent and its effect, helped along by Lorna. "Is it warming or cooling? Calming or invigorating? Does it go to your head?" In this way we went through 14 of the most commonly used oils, identified them and discussed their different functions. Frankincense "is a spiritual oil that helps with grief and anxiety. German choirboys were found to be getting stoned on the frankincense in church incense, so the chemical that

has the hallucinogenic qualities is now removed. Clary sage is an antidepressant..."

To try out our new knowledge, we split into pairs to make a restorative potion. Lorna recommended that we use no more than four oils in a blend. These were then diluted in a base oil to rub into the skin. The base oils have therapeutic qualities in themselves and are selected to suit each individual's skin type.

I was prescribing for Elaine Jacobs, who wanted something to relax her on stressful days. We chose camomile and neroli (from the blossom of the bitter orange tree), and added tea-tree for its anti-microbial action. Elaine wanted a light base oil so we chose grapeseed, with a small amount of evening primrose oil. To round things off, Lorna showed us a few of the basic massage movements, and still working in pairs we applied our personalised oils to each other. The trouble was, now that we were completely relaxed, we had to make our way home.

The cost of the course was the same as the price of an hour of aromatherapy massage, which seemed a bargain to me. Spend the same amount again on Clare Maxwell-Hudson's aromatherapy massage book and a small selection of oils, and you may feel you have made a sound investment in health and pleasure.

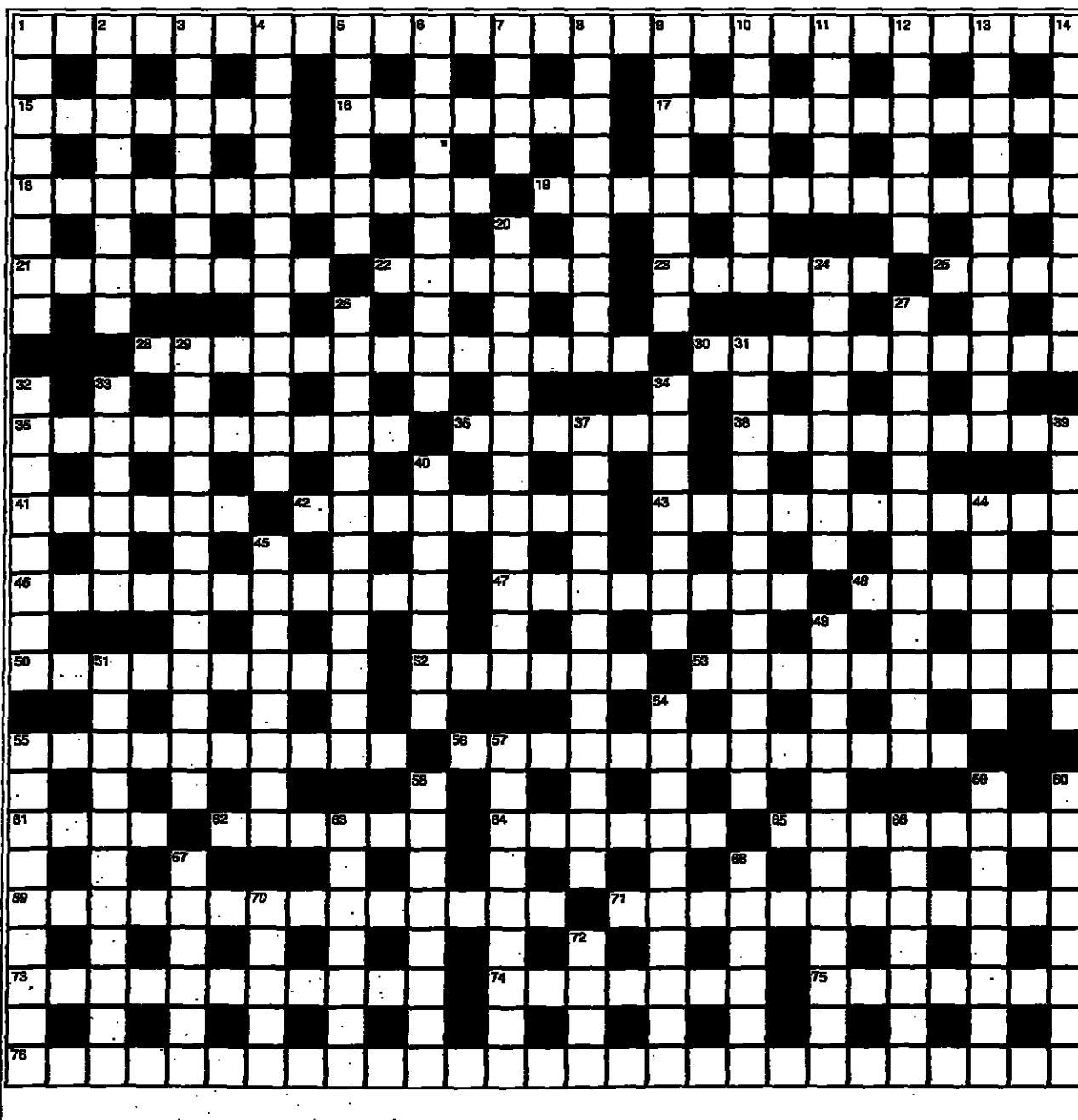
The Clare Maxwell-Hudson School in London (0181-450 6494) runs "Introducing Aromatherapy" one-day courses, cost £40. There is also a mail-order service for aromatherapy products.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS JUMBO CROSSWORDS

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 All the professional players having gone to heaven, presumably? (4,2,4,2,7,8)
- 15 Stir too vigorously making Italian dish (7)
- 16 Proposition suggesting our opponents should hold deposit? (7)
- 17 Discovery leading to honour (11)
- 18 Victor behaves so proudly at hunt parties (12)
- 19 Uncooperative person setting up stall? (14)
- 21 Succeeded in cooking curries for holidaymakers (8)
- 22 Volume woman holds open to reveal what's inside (6)
- 23 Overbalanced a little coming out for a spot of sledging (6)
- 25 A delay obtaining backing for festivity (4)
- 28 Sadder and wiser as an ex-magician, perhaps? (13)
- 30 Pity Alice's mislaid bag (10)
- 35 Secret entrance to cave (4,6)
- 36 Way sailor initially gets overseas (6)
- 38 Desire, on hopping into bed, grew rapidly (9)
- 41 Cook accepts retrospective atmosphere in monastery (6)
- 42 Old widow mugged in dangerous forest (4,4)
- 43 Love leads to outpouring of bitter, acid remarks, by the way (6,5)
- 46 Gamble recklessly in old copper coins – more than one collection (11)
- 47 Contents high temperature restricts the most overweight? (8)
- 48 Regulate some staying overnight (6)
- 50 Abnormal development in Gulf as timing somehow succeeds? (9)
- 52 Paintings framed in Spain and Hungary, extremely crude (6)
- 53 Article entrusted to engineers by Defence Intelligence vanishes (10)
- 55 S American location featured in a rival soap, perhaps? (10)
- 56 Turning red (13)
- 61 Timber trade (4)
- 62 August amount charged for accommodation in inn when returning (4,2)
- 64 Attempt by short story writer to produce verse (6)
- 65 Enclosure takes Doc unaware (8)
- 69 Best of order? (6,8)
- 71 Retailer of unsavoury stuff? (12)
- 73 Furniture item written of in French I fancy (11)
- 74 Trite remark made by new wife about old man initially (7)
- 75 Make speech about exercise function (7)
- 76 Notes identifying the Napoleon of the underworld? (5,2,3,6,2,3,6)
- DOWN
- 1 Ship's biscuit difficult to secure? (4,4)
- 2 Rich, sweet coulis, possibly American (8)
- 3 First hot music in Panama, for instance? (7)
- 4 Sprawling out of too head-first is most reckless (12)
- 5 Concealed old books (6)
- 6 Profligate lovers I have mostly ditched (4-6)
- 7 Greater number of soldiers in Middle East (4)
- 8 Note both of its ingredients are minimal (9)
- 9 Therapeutic intravenous injection for clergyman (8)
- 10 Reportedly someone missing in Japan, they say (7)
- 11 Malta: Grand Harbour besieged by Italian force (5)
- 12 Tradesman to take trouble making lining? (6)
- 13 Whereby one German division was annihilated (11)
- 14 Temple injured by a rusty can? (9)
- 20 One who's formed close bond after mixing of groups? (5,7)
- 24 Punch card code corresponded (8)
- 26 Ancient Greek plays with worldwide appeal? (7,5)
- 27 Intelligence gatherer experiencing something of a comedown? (12)
- 29 Involved in a case (12)
- 31 Motivation for socially responsible actions in the open air? (6,6)
- 32 Composer starts to work on leitmotiv for band (8)
- 33 Religious education teacher appears negligent (6)
- 34 Naturally native abandons mother – very foolish (7)
- 37 Food one handles unhygienically – it's traditional (3-9)
- 39 Distinguish cause of problem in feature below small sketch (8)
- 40 Account of Greek shipowner not settled? (7)
- 44 Most powerful Roman chariot broken by main shikking up (6)
- 45 Last time a temperature's entered, just after mid-July (8)
- 49 Place up north or one down south for attractive European? (8,4)
- 51 Girl fibs about worker initially retracting chivalrous remarks (11)
- 54 Croupier to set out for Caribbean island (6,4)
- 55 Guide from Rome to escort me (9)
- 57 Great elation about first show from bedding plant? (9)
- 58 Piece of pork not required by wife (5,3)
- 59 Support for champion (8)
- 60 Be flexible, accommodating Father – that's giving help (8)
- 63 Angle opened up by opponent in vain (7)
- 66 I'm to be in church on important date – fancy! (7)
- 67 Mix into cocktail: if iced, it's divine (6)
- 68 Import produce (6)
- 70 Hollow cavity cones in useful to some extent (5)
- 72 Consignment from which boy appears to have pinched ring (4)



By Spurius CONCISE CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 First line of nursery rhyme (3,4,4,3,1,5,3,4)
- 15 Absconder (7)
- 16 Standard work (7)
- 17 Fare served up as slapstick humour? (7,4)
- 18 Environment (12)
- 19 Deprive of voting rights (14)
- 21 Aesthetically pleasing (8)
- 22 Squirm (6)
- 23 Girl's name (6)
- 25 Formerly (4)
- 28 Prophecy (13)
- 30 Flap covering entrance of larynx (10)
- 35 Rich people (10)
- 36 Sexual desire (6)
- 38 Lyrical (9)
- 41 Foundation garment (4-2)
- 42 Idealistic (8)
- 43 Plan beforehand (11)
- 46 Disposition (11)
- 47 Declare (8)
- 48 Traditional practice (6)
- 50 Preventing from happening (9)
- 52 No.1 or No.2 batsman (6)
- 53 Temporary child-minder (4-6)
- 55 Type of dwelling (10)
- 56 Obstacle to progress (8-5)
- 61 Placed horizontally (4)
- 62 Decorative plaster (6)
- 64 Papal ambassador (6)
- 65 On each occasion that (8)
- 69 Health service professionals (6,8)
- 71 Small airfield (7-5)
- 73 Detestable thing (11)
- 74 Exact (7)
- 75 Marijuana cigarettes (7)
- 76 First line of hymn (3,6,6,3,9)

DOWN

- 1 Abroad (8)
- 2 Ornament (8)
- 3 Sacrilegious (7)
- 4 Attributes of successful gardeners (5,7)
- 5 Flower (6)
- 6 Overstate (10)
- 7 Church feature (4)
- 8 Building designer (9)
- 9 Avoided (8)
- 10 Tranquil (7)
- 11 Japanese city (5)
- 12 Take off (6)
- 13 Headstrong (11)
- 14 Radio audience (9)
- 20 Attribute constantly in evidence in one's work (5-2-5)
- 24 Carver of inscriptions (8)
- 26 Deferral (12)
- 27 State of health (12)
- 29 Shrub with showy flowers (12)
- 31 Trade-in (4-8)
- 32 Musical production (8)
- 33 Adherent of Islam (6)
- 34 Baffle (7)
- 37 White with anger (12)
- 39 Dairy (8)
- 40 Caricature (7)
- 44 Shrewd (6)
- 45 Foggiest (8)
- 46 Fancying oneself ill (12)
- 51 Sample of public attitudes (7,4)
- 54 Augury (10)
- 55 Play characterised by extravagant action and emotion (9)
- 57 Device for adjusting pitch of string (6,3)
- 58 Ruler (8)
- 59 On next page (8)
- 60 Offer of marriage (8)
- 63 Hot dishes? (7)
- 66 Coming into being (7)
- 67 Disappear (6)
- 68 Part of speech (6)
- 70 Killed (poetic) (5)
- 72 Season of fasting (4)

WIN

The Shorter Oxford Dictionary HOW TO ENTER

The sender of the first correct cryptic solution and the first correct concise solution will each win a thumb indexed edition of The Shorter Oxford Dictionary in two volumes. The first five cryptic runners-up each win The Oxford Guide to Writing and Speaking and the first five concise runners-up each win a copy of the New Oxford Thesaurus. Mark your entries "Concise Jumbo" or "Cryptic Jumbo" and send them to PO Box 4015, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Entries should arrive by noon on Thursday 11 June. Solutions and winners' names will appear on Saturday 13 June.



A fit of peaks

It's hardly the Himalayas, but there's plenty of Lake District mountains to keep hikers happy, writes Mark Rowe

Where shall we walk tomorrow?" asked one of a group of hikers. "Skiddaw," announced a friend in the sort of hushed tone more properly reserved for K2 than for England's fourth highest mountain. This conversation, overheard in Bertram's restaurant in Ambleside, captures much of the awe that surrounds the Lake District's peaks.

However, while it is wise to heed the official line that you need a map, a good weather forecast, a compass and warm clothes even in summer to walk in the Lakes' higher regions, there is some nonsense put about with regard to the technical difficulty involved. Just as it would be misleading to say that anyone can walk up Scafell Pike on a pre-breakfast leg-stretcher, it is equally wrong to assume that you require some kind of Chris Bonington chromosome.

During a week's holiday we climbed three of England's four highest mountains - Scafell Pike, Helvellyn and Skiddaw - along with one of the most tramped, the Old Man of Conistone. The first two have their hair-raising moments; the last pair are straightforward ascents. Don't be discouraged; our most pleasant surprise was that the walking got easier as the week wore on.

Despite its height, Skiddaw is a baby. We started climbing steeply from a car park near Applethwaite and just kept going until, two hours later, we reached the top. The contrast in scenery is astonishing. To the west and the south around Keswick are beautiful valleys such as Borrowdale, looking as though they are freshly moulded. To the east are the sweeping flanks of Blencathra, resembling a high moor rather than a mountain. As the hills roll northwards, the furze between them looks like vast brown tributaries of a great river.

Scafell Pike, England's highest peak at 3,210ft, is a different proposition. We chose the ascent from Great Langdale in the east, an 11-mile, seven-hour return trip. Setting off from the Old

Dungeon Ghyll hotel, we walked two miles along the valley with the Langdale Pikes far above us before climbing out of an apparent cul-de-sac via Rossett Gill. This steep and stony path was described by the Lakes' greatest authority, Arthur Wainwright, as the "least-liked" pass in the area.

We were now in a different, grassless world 2,000ft above the valley floor. An array of peaks surrounded us. Which one was Scafell Pike? we wondered. The answer, much to our despair, was none of them. The hardest part of this walk is more emotional than physical: the summit does not come into view until the last half mile and there were still two swinish and stony descents to negotiate, with the threatening shape

of the appropriately named Ill Crag to darken our mood further.

One pleasure of walking is greeting strangers in a way that would get you locked up if you did it on your regular journey to work. However, we noticed that one species of walker offers no such warmth. Usually male, they are distinguished by action trousers with multiple pockets, gaiters, beards and pipes. Perhaps they wish to give the impression that such puffing walks are way, way below their capacity; they would far rather be in a remote region of Nepal.

Things were more friendly on Helvellyn, an altogether prettier walk. We began in Glenridding on a nine-mile, six-hour route from the back of the village first leading to Lanty's Farm with

a view over Ullswater which, surrounded by trees, looked like the lake into Narnia in *The Magician's Nephew*.

The next uphill trawl was made easier by the delightful names on our OS map, including Dollywagon Pike and the Hole in the Wall, a stile where the summit is first viewed.

A walk along Striding Edge, a 6-ft wide plinth of stone, is one of the most thrilling experiences in the Lakes. However, little is made of the final ascent, a 50-metre scramble where we felt like Spiderman, gripping rocks to haul ourselves up. As we drew our breath, we studied a monument showing that there is an easier way up; in 1926, it is claimed, a light aircraft managed to land on the summit.

Wainwright urged us to take the scenic south-eastern route up Conistone Old Man. But it was time to see how man can blight a landscape by taking the traditional route from the village of Conistone, a path which led through a series of copper mines. In each direction vast holes were gouged out of the Old Man, disused now for 80 years or more. The wind whistled through the decaying cables and wheels, making the area seem even more forsaken.

From the summit we descended to the left of Dow Crag, popular with rock climbers, whose buttresses plunge steeply into the tarn of Goat's Water. We followed a path down to Conistone Water, scene of Donald Campbell's ill-fated *Bluebird* water-speed record attempt in 1967. Bluebird beer, in Conistone village, provided a pleasant end to the week's walking.

The walks up Helvellyn, Conistone and Skiddaw are described in the *Ordnance Survey Lake District pathfinder series*. For the Langdale assault on Scafell Pike, Wainwright's *The Southern Fells* remains unbeatable; the author's gentle wit does not fail even at times of exhaustion. *Ambleside Tourist Information Centre, 01539 435245*.

View of Skiddaw in the Lake District, one of England's four highest mountains. Photograph: David Hughes

What, when, where ...

Combe Martin in Devon will celebrate this weekend with an annual treat. A bizarre masked figure wearing a necklace of biscuits will be hunted, paraded backwards on a donkey, and symbolically shot and drowned to general village merriment. This is known as the Hunting of the Earl of Rone, and is believed either to be the reenactment of the capture of a shipwrecked Irish rebel (the Earl of Tyrone), or to have earlier, pagan origins, when a wild man of the woods was hunted and ritually sacrificed. Participants at the event keep up their strength by eating a giant strawberry cake and visiting various pubs, including the 200-year-old Pack o' Cards, which was built with the winnings from a game of cards and represents the diners' favourite pastime.

This weekend and Bank Holiday Monday at Combe Martin, Devon. Saturday, 8pm: dance to the Earl of Rone Band at the Town Hall. Sunday, 2.30pm: procession on the beach. Monday, 6pm: the Earl is hunted in Lady's Wood and taken through the village. Earl of Rone Society, 01271 882524. Sally Kindberg



A hoedown for city slickers

Farmers all over England are opening their gates to visitors this weekend in what the National Farmers Union has billed as a major attempt by the country to explain itself to the town. Yet on many farms itinerant humans already produce at least as much revenue as wheat, barley or cattle.

At Oldown Country Park, just north of Bristol, the owner, Robert Bernays, reckons that nearly 60 per cent of his income comes from tourists. His main innovation this season is a museum depicting 5,000 years of farming history, but he and his wife Alison first solicited visitors as far back as 1980.

Their earliest venture was into pick-your-own raspberries. Later they started a restaurant, then a farm shop. The next step was to open their ancient woodland, and finally they made part of the farm itself available for tours. Today the various attractions bring in more than 100,000 people a year.

Oldown has an unusual history. The present house was built in the 1840s, and advertised as being ideal "for a

Many farmers are making a living by opening up their land to visitors, reports Duff Hart-Davis

gentleman's residence". But in 1952 the house burnt down, and when Mr Bernays bought the property in 1962, he acquired "a huge white elephant, the shell of a Victorian mansion", with decaying ancillary buildings.

Having rebuilt the house to about a third of its former size, he took pleasure in finding uses for all the outbuildings as he restored them.

The place now has a bustling, busy air. Pick-your-own is still on the agenda, but it has become an occupation chiefly for the elderly and although the farm grows a lot of fruit, most of it is sold through the shop.

It is in activities for children that Oldown scores most highly. School visits to the farm often have a startling effect on youngsters from city centres. "We get children who've never been outside Bristol," says Mr Bernays,

"and at first some of them are really scared by the space."

It is the eight-year-old bullies, fearless little thugs on their own territories, who cling most tightly to teacher. But even if they consider it beneath them to bottle-feed a lamb, cuddle a goat or drive a miniature fork-lift truck, they can let off steam in the splendid assault course laid out in the wood. Rope bridges over ravines, net walls, a fireman's pole for swift descents out of a tree, a 30-metre foxhole tunnel snaking downhill through brambles - there is plenty of physical challenge.

The wood, which covers 80 acres, is large enough to seem a jungle. Among the trees the walls of a medieval vineyard are still visible. On a mound the remains of an iron-age fort command the Severn vale.

The fort features strongly in the

new museum, which explains (among much else) how the farmers of 5000BC collected bog iron from the swamps by the river and smelted it over fires blown by goatskin bellows. The exhibits include Roman and medieval coins, musket balls and a section from the trunk of an ancient tree, with markers pointing out the rings that grew in the years of significant historical events.

Between the world wars many city families used to stay with relatives on a farm in the summer holidays. Today such opportunities have largely disappeared, and Mr Bernays' aim is to offer latter-day children a sniff of their predecessors' experience.

"Many children have never even touched an animal," he says. "Arriving here can be quite traumatic - but at least, after two or three hours, they're not frightened of sheep any more."

Oldown Country Park, Tockington, Bristol BS32 4PG (01454 413605). For other open farms, call 0800 192 192 and ask for your local tourist information office.

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YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

هنا من الامل

The doors slid open and I felt frozen in the path of a tidal wave



MIKE ROWBOTTOM
SEES THE CUP FINAL IN BLACK AND WHITE TERMS

AS MY train stopped at and then pulled away from Farringdon Station's deserted platforms, I thought I must have missed the Cup final rush. There was less than an hour until kick-off and most of the Newcastle and Arsenal supporters, I reckoned, must already be sunning themselves in the Wembley concourses, sipping their lager, waving their banners and shouting the odds. Kings Cross-St Pancras. Confusion. Scavens. Noise. It seemed I had reckoned wrong. There was a brief moment before the doors slid open when I felt like someone frozen in the path of a tidal wave. The awesome natural phenomenon of the Toon Army - supping lager, waving banners,

shouting the odds - was just inches away, and in a few seconds the 1998 FA Cup final experience was about to engulf my quiet world. The human explosion took place. Suddenly, Newcastle fans were all around me, interpreting the seating arrangements with a freedom and ingenuity I had never previously witnessed. By the time everyone had crammed in, the carriage looked as if it had black and white wallpaper. "All right, son?" enquired a beaming, elderly man, ruffling up my hair. I gave my best impression of a laid-back grin before tugging my bag away from the unwitting trampling it was receiving from the figure who had taken on the role of choir-

master, or master of ceremonies, or chief shouter. "Too Narmy! Too Narmy!" As the cry was taken up, the noise level rose to ear-buzzing, disco proportions. In front of me stood a young man holding two cans, an opened one stacked on top of an unopened reserve. He was smoking - not with LT rule-breaking bravado, but a detached appreciation which was only broken when a rumbustious fellow-traveller cavorted into him. You could only speculate on what, if any, memories he would have of Newcastle's big match. We were on to Blaydon Races now. I had never previously managed to get the hang of the words of this North-eastern anthem, and as it beamed

around me I tried to make the most of my extended learning opportunity. I can now report that the song starts something like: "Oh, me lads, you should ha' seen us comin'," and includes the line, "Ia see the Blaydon Races". I think. Baker Street. Amused tourists looked up from their tube maps as our train came to a raucous halt. A young girl moved along the platform taking pictures of the carriage inhabitants, who responded with a range of leers and gestures which would prove amusing, or perhaps appalling, upon inspection at the photo counter. My hair-russling friend was now hanging out of the window, bellowing his predictions into the darkness of the tunnel. I,

meanwhile, was working hard on being the man with the black shoulder bag, blue polo shirt and strictly neutral expression. But my position became less easy when someone pulled down the windows of the connecting doors near my seat to reveal a group of Arsenal fans. Instantly, the opening became the main focus of attention, and the cheerleader began to direct chanting at the uneasy faces in the next carriage, like an officer calling down artillery fire. "Boring, boring Arsenal," was by far the kindest opinion voiced. Unwisely, one of the Arsenal fans took advantage of a lull in the proceedings to offer a reworking of the Righteous Brothers classic: "We've got

that Dou-ble feeling, whoa-oh that Double feeling..." The response was vociferous - "You've lost that Dou-ble Feeling..." - and the fingers were being jabbed in the Arsenal direction with increasing venom as the train pulled into Finchley Road and the carriage doors, once again, slid open. Many years ago, a researcher investigating animal psychology conducted an experiment in which two dogs regularly ran either side of a long fence, barking and snapping at each other through the stakes. One day, when this behaviour had become a firmly established pattern, a section of the fencing was removed. When the snarling would-be combatants discovered this un-

expected opportunity to translate threats into deeds, they paused momentarily, then ran on, barking and snapping. The chanting continued. Two platforms away, a huge, bare-chested man with a black and white bandanna stepped out of the train and then fell backwards, as if in slow motion, over a floral display. Laughter. The train was pulling away now. Next stop - Wembley. The supporters began hammering on the walls and roof. And someone, somewhere found the words to bring the whole travelling party together. "Stand up, if you hate Man U. Stand up, if you hate Man U. Stand up, if you hate Man U. Stand up, if you hate Man U."

Britons must master learning curve



John Roberts explains why many of the world's greatest attacking players have failed to succeed on the clay courts of Roland Garros

PREPARING for his annual dose of frustration at the French Open some years ago, Boris Becker made a trademark dive for a ball on a practice court at Stade Roland Garros in Paris. Rising to his feet, the imposing German began to wipe himself. One side of his body was covered, head to foot, in the dusty red clay. Noticing that he was being observed by a British journalist, Alan Page, Becker turned to him and said: "I'm half a clay court player now, huh?" Without wishing to act as a top-spin doctor for Greg Rusedski and Tim Henman, your correspondent suggests that while it would be embarrassing for Britain's finest to have their noses rubbed in the Paris clay in the days ahead, the experience need not be disastrous. It has happened to some of the best. Becker numbers among the great attacking players who have been unable to make a lasting impression on the slowest of the four Grand Slam surfaces. John McEnroe capitulated against Ivan Lendl after leading by two sets to love in the 1984 French final. John Newcombe failed to advance beyond the quarter-finals. And Pete Sampras is due to resume his quest to complete his collection of the majors next Monday.

Yesterday's draw made it feasible for Sampras to meet the unseeded Henman in the third round, although the 23-year-old from Oxford must first overcome the talented Armenian Sargis Sargsian, ranked No 94, followed by Andrei Medvedev or Andre Gaudenzi, both of whom are comfortable on clay. Sampras opens against his American compatriot Todd Martin.

Rusedski, seeded No 5, is due to play the Belgian Johan Van Herck, ranked No 97, in the first round, followed by a qualifier. Two Spaniards, Carlos Costa and Carlos Moya, may then lie in wait should Rusedski's groundstrokes continue to support his huge serve. Clay is not noted for yielding to the serve.

The closest Becker came to a triumph at the French Open was in 1989, when he lost in five sets against his Swedish rival Stefan Edberg in the semi-finals. Edberg was unable to capitalise after leading an inspired Michael Chang in the final. Becker, now semi-retired, does not have a clay court singles title to his name even though he spent many of his boyhood days playing on the surface.

Among the exceptions in fairly recent times was Yannick Noah, whose athleticism gained little on Wimbledon's lawns but who maximised his aggressive style to provide a home victory for the French at Roland Garros in 1983, and the Italian Adriano Panatta, who prospered from a spirit of adventure in 1976.

Conversely, some of the most tenacious counter-punchers have fallen short. Jimmy Connors was a semi-finalist on four occasions and Andre Agassi was the runner-up in two consecutive years (Agassi, like Sampras, requires the French for a full set of Grand Slam titles).

Which puts into context Bjorn Borg's astonishing feat in winning the French Open on six occasions, Wimbledon five times consecutively, and linking the titles three times in a row, scarcely pausing for breath between Paris and London SW 19.

British interest may have been revitalised by our men at Wimbledon and elsewhere, but only Fred Perry's footprints would qualify for a walk of fame at the French Open.

Until 1975, the French championships was the only one of the four Grand Slams which was not played on grass. The US Open then switched to clay for a brief period before settling for concrete. The Australian Open followed suit in 1988, leaving Wimbledon as the last oasis.

"Some say that grass is for cows," Rusedski remarked recently. "I guess clay is for making bricks." The British No 1's joke raises a serious point. Figuratively, the bricks created by working on clay courts represent the physical and mental components of a solid all-round game.

Although the red clay of Stade Roland Garros, and elsewhere in European tennis, may signify danger for British players, whose style is better suited traditionally to faster courts, the challenge of competing on the *terre battue* (beaten earth) is a healthy one. The bonus of playing on clay is that it fosters patience, strategy, timing, anticipation, swift, intelligent footwork and builds stamina. The benefits of practising and playing on clay tend to be long term, even for those players who endure the indignity of moving from one first-round defeat to another. Playing on clay improves the ability to hit deep, consistent groundstrokes, promotes confidence when engaged in lengthy rallies, and encourages the use of the lob and the drop-shot.

Only a few years ago, before Rusedski arrived from Canada and Henman began to develop towards his potential, it was a rarity for British men to be ranked high enough to gain direct entry to the top level ATP Tour events on any surface. The fact that they are doing the rounds of the mainstream clay-court circuit at all is a step forward.

Sensibly absorbing the setbacks as part of the learning process (and at times they have seemed uncertain whether to serve and volley or pitch and putt), they have expressed a determination not to confuse unease about the surface with a basic failure to convert opportunities.

Asked if he was inhibited about using a top-spin backhand as a variation to the slice, Rusedski said: "In practice I've been hitting it really well. I just have to set my mind. You mustn't have that indecision in your mind, no matter what standard you are."

Henman, while acknowledging that playing on clay is second nature to many opponents, endeavours to view his matches as further education. "I know it will help me so much more on other surfaces," he said.

Personal experience at the Italian Open that the Chilean Marcelo Rios is as brilliant on clay as he was on concrete at the Lipton Championships in Florida did not drive Henman off his "learning curve".

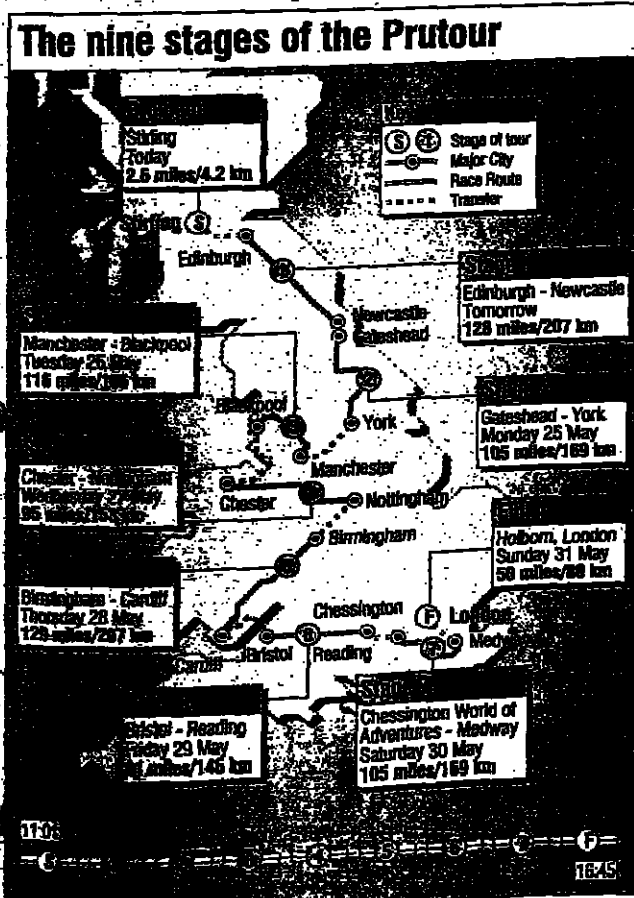
"Realistically," Rusedski said, "I haven't done that well on clay in the past, so it's just another challenge. It's part of being a tennis player. I'm hitting the ball well on the clay. Now it's just a case of turning it into the matches. I'm just learning how to do it. If I can do it, then victories will come. If I can't, there's always the nice grass!"



Rusedski: 'I haven't done well on clay in the past'

Photograph: PA

Fatigue floors Boardman's hopes in the race to be red



AFTER playing away for the past five seasons, Chris Boardman is set to enjoy home advantage in the Prutour round Britain race, which starts in Stirling today. Boardman, who rides for the French Gan team, plies his trade throughout continental Europe, but rarely in Britain. His last stage race appearance on home roads was in 1994 when the Tour de France roared through Kent, Sussex and Hampshire. Boardman, the world hour record holder on the track and rarely defeated in road time trials, should be relishing the nine-day tour which is being contested by 18 teams from a dozen nations. Last November, still basking in the glow of his prologue win in the Tour de France, he declared overall victory in the Prutour was a prime target for 1998. However, on the eve of the race his words came back to haunt him. "I said that I'd be going for the win and I'd dearly love it to happen, but the reality is my form isn't up to it," he said. "I get very tired very quickly and I don't know why."

Britain's first national cycling tour for four years starts today. Martin Ayres reports

Boardman has changed his training methods without any apparent effect, and is now awaiting the results of blood tests that he hopes will pinpoint the cause. He still clings to the belief that he can win today's time trial, a 2.6-mile sprint through the streets of Stirling. "The best I can hope for is to take the leader's jersey on day one and hold it for a few stages, then it could pass to one of my teammates who can go for the overall win," he said. Boardman reckons the Australian Stuart O'Grady is Gan's best bet for overall success. Like Boardman, O'Grady is a former world track champion, but unlike his leader he collected several top-10 placings in the spring classics. Another Australian, Neil Stephens, leads France's Festina squad. Stephens, a stage winner in the 1997 Tour de France, raced in Britain as a young professional before mak-

ing the big time in Europe. At 34, he is approaching retirement and a win in Britain would put a gloss on his last season. The other world figure in the 108-man peloton is Russia's Viatcheslav Ekmov, who has been in the top 10 of the international rankings throughout the 1990s. Ekmov leads US Postal, one of the few teams to complete last year's Tour de France without losing a rider. Despite the bait of a £100,000 prize fund, the quality of the Prutour field has fallen the quality of the organisers' high ambitions. Britain last staged a national tour in 1994, and the new event had to elbow its way on to a crowded international calendar. A clash with the Giro d'Italia has not helped, but sponsors Prudential plan a long-term involvement and a successful inaugural event should ensure more favourable dates next year. A hilly route and long, daily

mileages mean that the account will be on endurance - only two of the eight stages are shorter than 100 miles. The race also takes in every range of hills in Britain, from the Cheviots via the Pennines and Welsh valleys to Surrey's North Downs.

The manager, Keith Lambert, who will be directing the Britve Voice Systems team, reckons stage five, 129 miles from Birmingham to Cardiff, will be crucial. Riders will be softened up by the Malvern Hills and rolling Herefordshire roads before being hit by a double whammy in south Wales, where they tackle the "Tumble" climb at Abergavenny and Caerphilly Mountain in quick succession.

"The race won't be all over by Cardiff, but anyone with hopes of overall victory will need to be in touch with the leaders at that point," Lambert said.

Although the Prutour is modelled on the Tour de France, it is departing from tradition by insisting - in deference to the sponsor - that the leader wears a red jersey rather than yellow, making it one event in which everybody wants to finish in the red.

How the top 10 teams line up

GAN (FR)
Francis No 2 team fields one Briton, a Swede, a German, two Australians and an Indian, but no French rider. With Chris Boardman playing down his chances, Australia's Stuart O'Grady could step into the breach. New Swedish signing Magnus Backstedt impressed in April with seventh place in the Paris-Roubaix classic.

FESTINA (FR)
Australian Neil Stephens lives and trains in the Brecon country so he'll like Rosedale Churney in north Yorkshire and Holme Moss in the Pennines hold few fears for the man from Cambuslang. A "super domestique", who normally works for the greater good of the team, he leads a young squad of French, Spanish and German riders. In 1995 and proved he is still a force by winning the Lloyds Grand Prix earlier this month. Consistent Kevin Descomens is the team's best hope for a high overall spot. Nick Craig, Britain's mountain bike champion, makes a temporary switch from mud to road.

GREAT BRITAIN
Chris Lillywhite won the Milk Race back in 1993 and proved he is still a force by winning the Lloyds Grand Prix earlier this month. Consistent Kevin Descomens is the team's best hope for a high overall spot. Nick Craig, Britain's mountain bike champion, makes a temporary switch from mud to road.

SCOTLAND
Twice national road champion, Brian Smith is enjoying a renaissance as captain of the sponsored Scottish squad formed with the Commonwealth Games as its main target. Scotland No 2 is pedalling postman Drew Wilson, who insists that win or lose this is definitely his last year at 31.

WALES
Julian Winn has made a successful switch from mountain biking to road racing, with top-10 placings in international tours over the last two years. Wales' selection policy is all-encompassing, which explains the English accents of Simon Gray and David Reed.

TEAM BRITVE VOICE (GB)
Formed this year with a big budget and high ambitions, Britve Voice has swept the board in British races. Jerry Clay won the Tour of Lancashire four-day and a host of other events, but he may have peaked too soon. If so, John Tarrar or Chris Newton are capable of assuming team leadership.

LINDA MCCARTNEY (GB)
The all-village squad pulled off a coup by signing Sean Yates, the 38-year-old ex-Tour de France leader, to replace the injured Scott Gamble. Although retired from international racing, Yates is still fit enough to reign as national 50-mile champion.

US POSTAL SERVICE (US)
Rusedski's Welshman Ekmov should challenge Chris Boardman in the prologue time trial. For overall honours, the team will look to their lone Frenchman, Jean-Cyril Robin, who finished 12th in the 1997 Tour de France.

SIGMANT AUER 93 (FR)
Yet another Australian, Jay Sweet, is Britain's best bet for success. Sweet won't be chasing the red jersey of leadership, but his powerful sprint finish could earn him at least one stage win.

OLMIE (US)
The veteran Italian sprinter Roberto Gaggioli goes into the Prutour with a career record of 188 victories. He should top 200 some time this year, but the absence of flat roads will hamper his chances in this event. However, the American Chad Gaskovich could find the terrain to his liking.

Bristol's decline risks resulting in ultimate fall

After today's Premiership One play-off, Bristol may lose their top-flight status. Chris Hewett reflects on years of turmoil that precipitated the collapse of a once mighty West Country club

IT USED to be known as the "Bristol fashion", a highly marketable brand of designer rugby tailored along classical lines — ugly pack, snappy half-backs, svelte sharp finishers out wide — but sufficiently smart and street-sensitive to maintain its balance on the cutting edge of a fast evolving game. Fifteen years on, there is nothing remotely hip about the Bristol club; musty, threadbare and reeking of neglect, it is the Afghan coat of the Allied Dunbar Premiership. And today, it risks being consigned to the wardrobe of history.

If London Scottish successfully defend a four-point lead in the second leg of a nerve-jangling play-off, they will assume Bristol's place in the top drawer of the English game. Had it not been for an isolated and wholly uncharacteristic explosion of pugilistic activity from Derrick Lee, the Exiles' international full-back, the landlord of the Last Chance Saloon would already have called time on his West Country regulars.

Lee's dismissal for knocking David Corkery, the abrasive Irish flanker, into the middle of the next millennium gave the rapidly expiring fallen giants a chink of light against which to rage at the Memorial Ground this afternoon. Those who respond emotionally to the grand traditions of the domestic game will rage with them, for Bristol are undeniably a big club with

potential to become the biggest. As Mike Rafter, their cup-winning captain of 1983, said this week: "Without overstating the case, this city is one of the greatest rugby heartlands anywhere in the world."

But Rafter knows better than anyone that it is currently a heartland without a capital. Seldom has a rugby ground been more appropriately named, for the "Mem" is now a 10,000-capacity funeral parlour shrouded in the mists of reminiscence. Indeed, many of those most worthy of fond recall — Alan Morley, Nigel Pomphrey, Austin Sheppard, John Doubleday, Peter Pollock, Bob Hesford — still enjoy the odd pint in the lovely old members' bar and their very presence there adds a gut-wrenching poignancy to the painful situation in which the club now finds itself.

For many of the Bristol faithful, one fluffed goal-kick will always symbolise the great and apparently irreversible decline. It was not, to be fair, just any old kick, coming as it did in the last minute of the 1984 cup final with Bath; had Stuart Barnes, the new boy wonder of English rugby, not allowed the pressure to splinter his usual sang-froid, he would have retained the John Player trophy for his side and, in the view of many romantics, strangled the "Bath era" at birth.

That Barnes would soon

help transform Bath into the greatest club side of them all remains the most bitter of ironies for Bristol and it is perhaps understandable that his name should remain mud on the Memorial Ground terraces. But those who continue to accuse him of calculated disloyalty merely delude themselves. The brutal truth is that Barnes had detected something rotten at the heart of the Bristol committee structure and decided to jump ship before he fell victim to its ravages.

"They were too insular, too narrow-minded for my liking," he once explained. "It seemed to me that those in charge were smug, self-satisfied and wholly lacking in ambition." And so it proved. Comfortable in the knowledge that they had been a major power for almost a century, the gin-and-tonic brigade allowed young, vibrant talents of the calibre of David Sole, David Egerton and Phil de Glanville to slip through the net. They were not Bristol material, apparently.

Over the next decade, they would fail to keep a veritable battalion of prime talents who were considered to consist of precisely the right stuff: Jon Webb, Arwel Thomas, Kyrn Bracken, David Hilton, Alan Sharp, Mark Regan, Simon Shaw, Garath Archer, Andy Blackmore, Derek Eves. Every club loses the occasional diamond, but only Bristol can claim to have mislaid an entire mine-field.

Even when the Bristol management — or mismanagement, as they have long been labelled — appeared to be ahead of the game, the consequences were either Fawcettesque or seriously depressing. Following Northampton's lead in making Barrie Cordell their full-time director of rugby, they appointed Colin McFadyen, a former England captain, in 1989. "Sadly," recalls Alistair Hignell, a Bristol international who now broadcasts on the game for the



The Bristol flanker David Corkery confidently wins a line-out ball against Newcastle's Doddie Weir in a rare moment of supremacy during a season of setbacks for the West Country club

Andrew to step aside for prodigy

By Chris Hewett

JONNY WILKINSON'S reputation precedes him by such a distance that it is difficult to locate the player himself without the aid of a telescope, but Newcastle's teenage prodigy is expected to appear in full view in the Sanyo Cup at Twickenham today.

The newly crowned Premiership champions are preparing to give the 18-year-old midfielder a first senior start at outside-half, the position he seems destined to fill for England during this summer's southern hemisphere tour.

Wilkinson has spent all season understudying Rob Andrew, the Falcons' director of rugby, although he progressed sufficiently to force a place at centre during the latter stages of the title run-in. Yesterday, however, Andrew hinted that he would step aside for at least some of the match against Philippe Sella's World XV.

It should ensure a flicker of genuine interest in what has been dismissed as a meaningless and unnecessary addition to the longest domestic campaign in the history of English rugby. Neither Leicester nor Wasp managed to prevail against their scratch opponents in the previous two matches, probably because they were in the advanced stages of exhaustion. Resilient as they may be, Newcastle may well find their task equally thankless this afternoon.

The most serious business of the day takes place 100 or so miles to the west, where Bristol attempt to protect their top-flight status from the hungry wannabes of London Scottish. The Exiles won last Sunday's first leg 29-25 and might easily have done better still; certainly, John Steele, their coach, fancies his side's chances of a repeat performance.

"We played much the better rugby on Sunday and while the slate has been wiped clean for this game, we'll be looking to play at pace and put a number of scores past them once more," he said.

Iain McAusland, the Australian Under-21 international, replaces Derrick Lee at full-back. Lee was sent off for punching in the opening encounter and, ironically, is now in Australia with the Scottish Test party. Bristol, meanwhile, may discipline their unsettled England tourist, the utility back Josh Lewsey, for declaring himself unavailable for play-off duty. Lewsey cited pressure of exams, but his club consider him in breach of contract.

The Wasp lock Simon Shaw is the latest player to pull out of England's tour to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Shaw, who has had to withdraw on medical grounds, is replaced by Gloucester's uncapped lock Dave Sims. England now have 19 uncapped players in their 37-man squad.

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Awful, depressing and upsetting: Bristol players of the past fear for the future

Alistair Hignell

Bristol and England full-back, capped 14 times between 1973 and 1979

"The club has been taken by surprise by every development in the game since the mid-1980s. League rugby crept up on them. Bath emerged as the major West Country power while people at the Memorial Ground were still looking for Gloucester in their wing mirrors and the move to full professionalism caught them cold. There has always been this idea that having established themselves as a

great club, things would automatically tick over. Even now, I hear people saying: 'Don't worry, it will sort itself out.' Sadly, things don't sort themselves out any more. As an objective broadcaster, I can only say that I hope and pray we stay up. I find the thought of relegation too awful to contemplate."

Richard Harding

Bristol and England scrum-half, capped 12 times between 1985 and 1988

"I find the whole situation very sad, very depressing. We inhabit

a different rugby age now but there has never been a time when a big club did not need to approach things in a professional manner. There has been a lack of vision and, in particular, a misunderstanding of the imperatives of professionalism. It seems to me that the current management, many of whom have been involved for many years, are too parochial in their outlook, too inward-looking and, yes, small-minded. Bath, on the other hand, attracted people of huge ability with broad horizons. I don't want to see

Bristol relegated, but perhaps it would give the club a chance to start afresh."

Mike Rafter

Bristol and England flanker, capped 17 times between 1977 and 1981

"Like any business, a rugby club is driven by the management, the men at the top, and without naming names, I believe some top-level appointments to have been serious misjudgements. There have been so many internal wrangles at the Memorial Ground that the club

has, quite literally, taken its eye off the ball. It hurts me to visit the offices and see on the wall a picture of me holding the John Player Cup aloft. Fifteen years ago, there was a huge crescendo of rugby interest in the city and we're in terrible danger of seeing the last remnants of that drift away. There is no simple remedy. There used to be one agenda in rugby, but professionalism has produced millions of different agendas. All I know is that I find the club's current predicament dreadfully upsetting."

Ebbw Vale confident of a place in history

By Robert Cole

A SEASON of massive discontent for Welsh rugby will finally close at Bristol's Ashton Gate with Ebbw Vale trying to make it a hat-trick of wins over Llanelli to take the Swalec Cup for the first time today.

It is a classic case of the hungry underdogs against the club who have been there, done it all and are expected to win the trophy for the 10th time in 27 years. But, just as nobody could have predicted the mayhem the game in Wales has had to suf-

fer since the season kicked-off on 16 August, so picking a winner in the final is a difficult task.

One of the biggest bonuses for Llanelli should be their experience, yet only five of their side have played in a final before — Nigel Davies, Wayne Proctor, Rupert Moon, Neil Bootley and Iwan Jones — and three players have represented Wales this season — Proctor, Bootley and Mike Voyle.

As for Ebbw, they have three players who have reached the final before — Richie Collins, Mark Jones and Jon Funnell —

and three who have played international rugby this season — the skipper Kingsley Jones for Wales and Siua Taumololo and Kuli Faletau with Tonga.

No wonder, then, that the ebullient Jones believes his side can pick up the biggest prize in their 100-year history. "I don't think there is anything Llanelli can do if we play to our potential. No one can beat Ebbw Vale if we are at our best," he said.

"We've reached the final by beating three Premier Division teams, including both of last season's finalists, and it would be

awful if we threw it all away at the final hurdle. We have taken the tough route to this final and we know that on merit we deserve to win it. The players also know, though, that it is a one-off occasion and we still have to go out and play to our best."

"Every game we have lost this season we deserved to lose. We lost to Cardiff in the League because we thought we had arrived and we went down to Neath because our eyes were on the Cup final. This is no flash in the pan and I don't think there is a danger of us freezing on the big day.

We have experienced players who have figured in Cup finals before, Tongan internationals who have played at Ellis Park and Loftus Versveldt in South Africa and players like myself, Byron Hayward and David Llewellyn who have been involved with Welsh teams this season."

It is a tough one to call and, heaven knows, the Welsh rugby public need a high-class, exciting spectacle to end their season. Winning the cup is one thing, but what Llanelli and Ebbw Vale are charged with doing is washing away the bitter

taste of record-breaking Five Nations defeats, internecine wrangling between the leading clubs and the Welsh Rugby Union, the loss of one coach and the farcical non-appointment of another and the tragic injury to the Welsh captain Gwyn Jones.

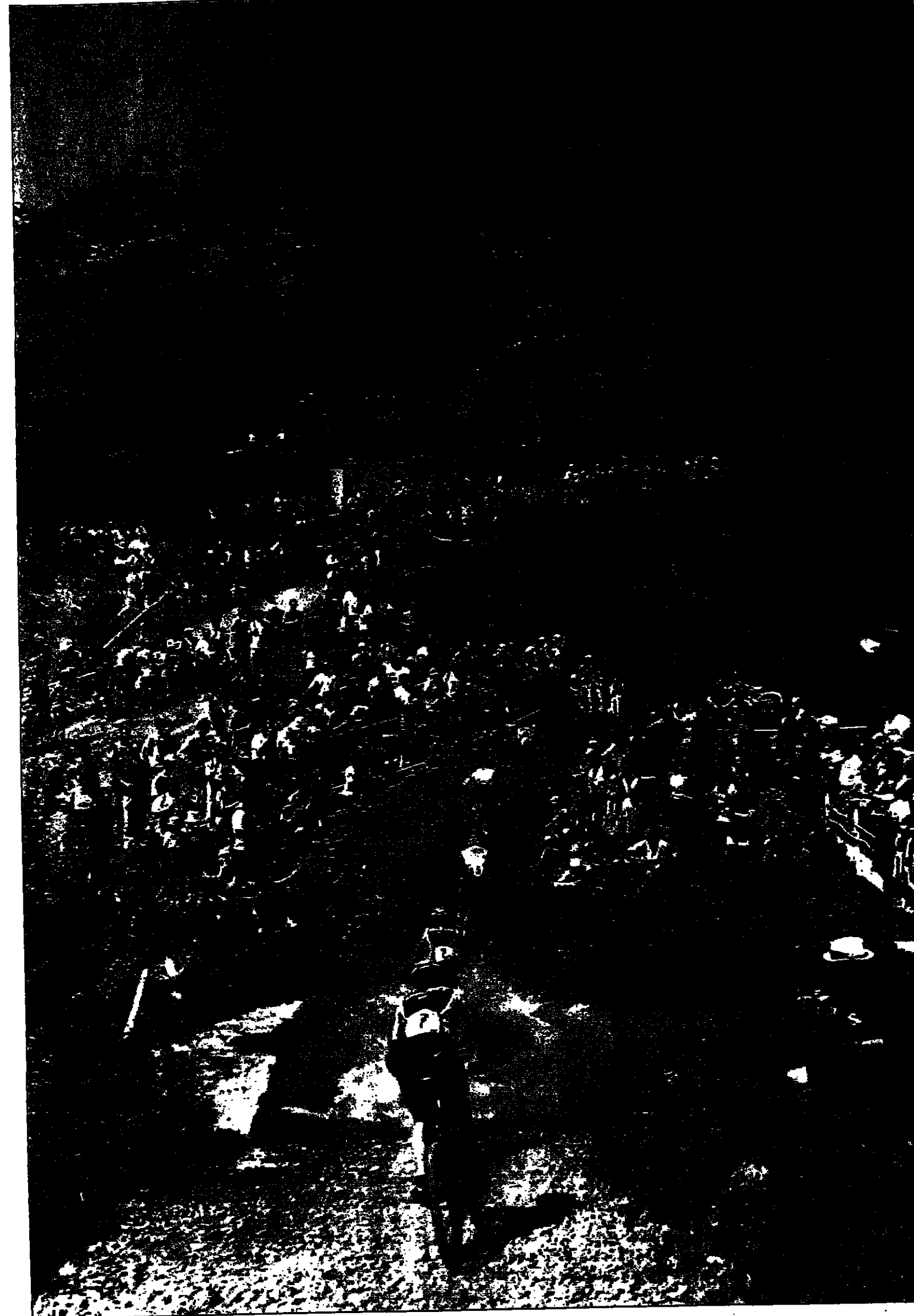
It promises to be an intriguing match, but any feelgood factor promises to be shortlived as tomorrow the 221 Welsh clubs will be attending a Special General Meeting to discuss possibly excluding Cardiff from membership and what shape the lower divisions will take next season.

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Daredevil plunge into the 'pipeline'

IT IS the two-wheeled, off-road equivalent of Formula One racing and last weekend it was the turn of a Plymouth park to host the mountain bike World Cup - an eight-round series which had already visited the United States, Portugal, Hungary and Germany.

A sweltering Sunday at Newnham Park on the edge of Dartmoor saw 193 male elite category riders, including many British hopefuls, tackle five laps of a gruelling 10-kilometre course consisting of hard climbs across open moorland, fast and narrow descents through woodland trails (complete with emergency padding on some trees), numerous river crossings and the notorious "pipeline" descent. This is a 150ft drop down an extremely steep and rock-strewn bank into a river valley with a tight chicane at the bottom.

The tricky course made for

PHOTOGRAPHS
BY
ROBERT
HALLAM

an excellent spectacle for the 20,000 strong crowd. In the clouds of dust that formed on the pipeline some riders inevitably lost control and ended up parting company with their bikes, while others seemed to glide effortlessly through the chicane and off into the woods.

The riders are all top-level athletes. Years of conditioning, strict diets and a massive lung capacity are coupled with a fierce will to win as the Australian Cadel Evans showed. The women's race was won by Laurence Leboucq, of France. Both riders are expected to compete at the 2000 Olympics.

It certainly was a great day out for the home, off-road biking fraternity, who are already looking forward to next year's event. ● Copies of these photographs - and any others by *The Independent's* sports photographers David Ashdown, Peter Jay and Robert Hallam - can be ordered by telephoning 0171-293-2534.

After passing scrutineering (bottom centre), mountain bikers like nothing better than a 10km slog through the heat and dust over rough terrain. A dash through the water splash (top left) comes as a relief, but the steep descents can take their toll, as Peter Edwards found (bottom left).



Hollis

Barnett eloquent

Chappell back Redbacks

Chappell back Redbacks

Chappell back Redbacks

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Holioake needs to convince sceptics

By Derek Pringle
Cricket Correspondent

FOR one man, the result of today's Texaco Trophy match at Old Trafford will have all the importance of a World Cup final. Adam Holioake may not have sought the one-day captaincy of his country, but you can tell he likes the new uniform. Yet fashion is a fickle thing and unless his team beat South Africa today and get back into the three-match series, he may well find himself wearing civvies to next summer's big event.

Holioake is a leader caught between orthodoxies: a modern captain of a rapidly mutating game still run by traditionalists. As a result, the divergent paths that England's one-day and Test players now find themselves treading are perhaps not as distinct as many believe, with the need for separate captains still hotly debated.

But if Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting, both of them former England captains as well as selectors, are believed to favour a single captain - as the initial appointment of Mike Atherton for the one-day series in the Caribbean would suggest - the England coach, David Lloyd, is clearly in the "two captains" camp.

Having been an important part of Holioake's barnstorming wins in Sharjah, Lloyd feels that the bumpy ride being given to Holioake, particularly following Thursday's loss, is more than a little unfair.

"I thought Adam had a good game," said Lloyd yesterday. "He played really well with the bat. He's a strapping lad who likes to hit the ball, but losing four quick wickets forced him to move it around instead."

"He also handled the bowlers well and showed imagination. When certain batters came in, he wasn't afraid to change things immediately. I felt he bossed the situation and made South Africa work hard for their runs."

Making teams work hard is not the same as winning, which is what England normally do in home one-day series, and what Holioake needs to convince the sceptics that separate captains are indeed the way forward.

Brown is doubtful England starter

Hockey

By Bill Colwill
in Utrecht

ENGLAND'S World Cup teams spent yesterday preparing for crucial games today, against Argentina for the women, and Pakistan, the defending world champions, for the men.

The women may have to cope without Karen Brown, who is a very doubtful starter after suffering a hand injury against the Dutch on Thursday.

The only game of direct British interest yesterday saw Scotland go down 2-1 to the USA in their second defeat of the tournament.

After conceding a penalty corner goal to Kate Barber in the second minute, Scotland struggled to get into their stride and the Americans claimed a second through their captain, Tracey Fuchs, six minutes into the second half.

The second goal forced the Scotland coach Mike Gilbert to change three front-runners, which brought his side back into the game.

Scotland then created a series of chances, with Rhona Simpson missing several good opportunities before, with 14 minutes to go, she won a penalty stroke when obstructed by the goalkeeper. Sue MacDonald made no mistake from the spot, but the Scots did not capitalise on several chances to equalise.

The Goalkeeper Tracey Robb played well, with one outstanding save from Kelli James, while Val Neil was the pick of an often overworked defence.

Equestrianism

By Genevieve Murphy
at Windsor

TERRY BOON and Polly Clark, both aged 24 and fellow members of the winning British team in the 1994 European Young Rider's Championships, have retained their overnight leads in the two senior sections of the Chubb Insurance Windsor International Horse Trials.

Both suffered the ignominy of being eliminated in dressage tests in 1995 (Clark at Badminton and Boon at Burghley) but they did everything right on Thursday and their scores were not bettered when the dressage was completed yesterday.

Boon, who won team and individual gold medals in the European Young Riders contest of 1993, leads in the major Chubb Insurance section with Blue Admiral, whose score of 37.2 penalties gave him a pleasant surprise. "He doesn't give you a stunning feel, but he creates a nice picture and the judges seem to like him," Boon said of the nine-year-old grey gelding.

Richard Waygood, who is equitation warrant officer in the Household Cavalry, remains in second place on Crackerjack III, with Andrew Nicholson, who also rides Valhalla IV here, had been due to do his dressage with King Leo on Thursday - but he was allowed to delay his test until the owners of the horse had arrived from America to watch him. The eight-year-old achieved the best of yesterday's scores.

Barnett's century is eloquent response

By John Collis
at Horsham

KIM BARNETT came out to bat at second wicket down yesterday, and was greeted by a telling silence. A hundred runs later, and the appreciation was noticeably restrained. His tabloid hatchet job on Chris Adams, the former colleague now skipping Sussex, had clearly been an essential reading in Horsham. His response to the frosty reception was also eloquent - a confident clip-off Jason Levy to the third man boundary.

Although one hourly expects its dry, flat wicket to give purchase to the spinners, it has not yet happened. If anything, it has got flatter and firmer. It was the speed and class of Dominic Cork and Phillip DeFreitas that kept Sussex to a

manageable score, while Mark Newell's unbeaten 135 must surely mean he survives Adams' return to the side.

Given that Barnett's controlled, determined century was the 53rd of his career it came as no huge revelation. He was reprieved by Wasim Khan, fumbling at gully, on both 22 and 128, but apart from these aberrations it was a typically gritty epic. More surprising was the manner in which Matthew Casar chased him to three figures, his first century.

Cassar, whose wife Jane keeps wicket for England, bowled a brisk medium pace on Thursday without looking penetrating, but his batting was mature and entertaining, and he reached the landmark with a glorious, but not untypical, cover drive. Coming in after a mus-

cular 50 from Adrian Rollins, Casar - like the younger Newell brother for Sussex - has surely ensured a first-team run. At 216 he and Barnett passed a 60-year-old record for any Derbyshire wicket against Sussex and then took first-innings lead, batting the visitors into a controlling position on a glorious evening.

Wayne Noon, the Nottinghamshire wicketkeeper, will be out of action for a minimum of four weeks after breaking the little finger of his left hand while batting against Warwickshire at Edgbaston yesterday. Nottinghamshire wanted to draft in the England A keeper Chris Read, their recent signing from Gloucestershire, to act as a replacement for the remainder of the Championship match but their application to Lord's has been turned down.



Durham's James Daley takes evasive action as Robert Key, the Kent opener, powers his way towards a century in the County Championship match at Canterbury yesterday. Photograph: Andy Kerry/Kent News & Pictures

Chappell back at Redbacks

THE former Australian captain Greg Chappell was appointed yesterday to coach the South Australian state cricket squad 25 years after quitting the team to captain Queensland.

Chappell was recruited to help boost the state's flagging performance in the Sheffield Shield competition. The Redbacks finished last in the six-team tournament in 1997 and 1998 after winning the Shield in 1996.

"All I can try to do is call on my experience and knowledge to come up with things that can help them in the areas they feel they need help," Chappell said. In addition to coaching the side, Chappell will also develop new talent for future state and national sides.

McLean seizes advantage

By Jon Culley
at Leicester

HAMPSHIRE maintained the upper hand as Leicestershire struggled to compensate for the absence of five front-rank players yesterday.

Leicestershire will begin the third day with some ground still to make up towards their initial target of avoiding the follow-on after the West Indian fast bowler, Nixon McLean, claimed three wickets before bad light and rain interrupted play in mid-afternoon.

His dismissal of Ben Smith, with a ball the batsman can scarcely have seen, precipitated a second stoppage. Having had his off-stump knocked out of the ground, Smith must have wished he had accepted

the chance to leave the field moments earlier, as an area of grey cloud stubbornly made its presence felt.

McLean has the pace to pose difficulties even on the brightest day, and even on a relatively placid pitch such as the one he has hit hard in this contest.

Smith gave Leicestershire's first innings a swift start but Vince Wells never looked comfortable and there looked to be little conviction in the wait that had him caught at second slip. Iain Sutherland, promoted to open in place of Darren Maddy - absent on England duty - was leg before to an in-swinging yorker.

The removal of Smith may yet prove important, given his rapid advance to 40. Hav-

ing been helped off the mark with four overthrows, courtesy of Peter Hartley, Smith was soon hitting the ball sweetly and collected six more boundaries in his first 30 runs, including a couple of fairly imperious blows off McLean himself.

Hampshire continued to exploit Leicestershire's weakened attack before lunch. Adam Mullally finished with five wickets and impressive figures after shouldering a heavy workload but wicketkeeper Adrian Aymes, who extended his fourth Championship century to a career-best 133, and Shaun Udall, with 44, turned Hampshire's total into one that may form the basis for their first victory of the season.

Middlesex are made to suffer

By David Llewellyn
at Uxbridge

THIS was an unhappy day in Middlesex history. Their shirt-front of a pitch may have been ironed into creaseless submission, but Mark Ramprakash and his men were also hung out to dry. Worcestershire piled up runs like so much laundry, in a basket until Middlesex were positively creaking under the weight.

By the time Tom Moody declared, Middlesex had conceded 600 runs in a County Championship innings for the first time in their history - and in so doing, became the last county to concede 600-plus.

They had only been subjected to three other totals in the same region - 665 against

West Indies in 1939, 612 against Oxford University in 1876 and a more modest 603 against The Rest in 1920.

Moody was not their chief tormentor either. He perished, without adding to his overnight 132, to the 14th delivery with the new ball, leg before to Richard Johnson to one that kept a trifle low.

Thereafter David Leatherdale took up the cudgels and strung together a fine collection of shots, particularly through the off-side, in compiling a stand of 191 in 54 overs with the wicketkeeper Steve Rhodes for the sixth wicket.

Leatherdale is certainly in form. In his previous outing he made 99. Yesterday he went a lot further, only falling when he had bettered that by 38 runs to

complete the 10th first-class century of his career and his eighth in the Championship. He was in for a shade over four hours, having hit a six and 18 fours.

With Rhodes unbeaten on a classy 67, Moody finally showed some clemency and declared the innings closed, but there was more torture for Middlesex with the premature loss of Richard Kettleborough when the reply had barely got under way.

Thankfully, the Australian left-hander, Justin Langer, and the Middlesex captain, Ramprakash, who had 600-odd reasons to get his head down, steadied things as they set about nibbling away at the formidable Worcestershire total.

Cricket scoreboard

British Assurance County Championship

Second day of tour, 11.0 today

Essex v Lancashire	
CHILMSFORD: Essex (Sp), with 10 second-innings wickets standing, are 61 runs behind Lancashire (7).	
Lancashire won toss	
ESSEX - First Innings 242 (S G Law 55; G Chappell 5-49).	
LANCASHIRE - First Innings (Overnight: 36 for 0)	
N T Wood c Rollins b Iott	14
M A Atherton b Iott	20
J P Crawley b Iott	1
N H Fairbrother c Flanagan	128
A Flintoff c Flanagan b Crawley	29
M Watkinson c Robinson b D R Law	40
W K Hogg c Hibbert b D R Law	0
G Chappell c Flanagan b D R Law	31
R J Green b Iott	14
D J Shepherd not out	13
Extras (b, w, nb)	28
Total (107.4 overs)	314
Fall: 1-40, 2-41, 3-43, 4-100, 5-178, 6-181, 7-81, 8-284, 9-284.	
Bowling: Birt 22.4-9-49-3; Williams 20.5-8-11-5; Coulson 25.5-12-11-19-0; D R Law 25.4-7-0-4; Hibbert 5-1-19-0.	
ESSEX - Second Innings	
D D D Roberts not out	4
A N Flanagan not out	4
Extras (b, w, nb)	11
Total (for 0, 38 overs)	11
To bat: S D Hogg, S G Law, R C Iant, A J Hibbert, R J Flanagan, D R Law, M C Iott, N F Williams, D M Cousins.	
Umpires: R A White and J Lloyd.	

Gloucestershire won toss	
GLoucestershire - First Innings 329 (R C Russell 83; A M Smith 61; G I Macmillan 55; C White 8-55).	
YORKSHIRE - First Innings (Overnight: 16 for 1)	
M P Vaughan b Smith	10
P M Hinchey not out	23
D Byles c Church b Walsh	2
D S Lammann b Alleyne	41
C White c Russell b Lewis	24
M J Wood b Lewis	0
R J Bailey c Russell b Walsh	14
G M Hamilton b Walsh	0
R D Stamp b Bell	5
M J Hoggard b Bell	5
Extras (b, w, nb)	13
Total (62.4 overs)	143
Fall (cont): 2-20, 3-23, 4-78, 5-112, 6-112, 7-134, 8-134, 9-141.	
Bowling: Walsh 19-10-30-3; Smith 13-8-15-2; Alleyne 7-0-19-1; Lewis 10-0-58-2; Bell 16-4-30-2.	
GLoucestershire - Second Innings	
G I Macmillan c Wood b Hinchey	0
T H C Hancock c Bailey b Hoggard	4
A J Wright c and b White	57
M G N Windows not out	10
Extras (b, w, nb)	10
Total (for 3, 38 overs)	130
To bat: M J Church, R C Russell, M J Bell, J Lewis, A M Smith, C A Walsh.	
Umpires: R Palmer and A G T Wilkes.	

T R Ward c Speight b Batts	18
C I Hooper c Speight b Harrison	1
A P Wells b Foster	95
A P Wells b Foster	17
B F Smith b Harrison	13
M A Marsh c Speight b Batts	32
D W Headley c Speight b Phillips	31
M M Patel b B Gough	24
M J McCague b Phillips	0
A P Gigglesford not out	1
Extras (b, w, nb)	25
Total (124.2 overs)	465
Fall: 1-183, 2-207, 3-209, 4-216, 5-252, 6-402, 7-454, 8-477, 9-477.	
Score at 120 overs: 470 for 7.	
Bowling: Batts 27-7-86-1; Harrison 22-3-91-3; Wood 22-9-67-1; Phillips 26-3-67-2; Foster 20-2-75-2; Gough 22-0-36-1.	
GLoucestershire - Second Innings	
J B Lewis not out	1
M A Gough not out	1
Extras (nb)	1
Total (for 0, 1 overs)	3
To bat: A J E Morris, N J Speak, P D Collingwood, M P Speight, M J Foster, N G Phillips, M B Smith, J Wood, S J Harrison.	
Umpires: D J Constant and J F Steele.	

Leicestershire - First Innings	
V J Wells c Keogh b McLean	15
I J Sutcliffe b McLean	17
B F Smith b McLean	40
A Hobbins not out	17
Extras (b, w, nb)	15
Total (for 3, 26.2 overs)	104
Fall: 1-38, 2-53, 3-104.	
To bat: P V Simmons, M J Dalish, T P A Nouri, D Williamson, T J Mason, A D Mulally, M T Brimmon.	
Umpires: H D Bird and J H Harris.	

Middlesex v Worcestershire	
UXBRIDGE : Middlesex (2pts), with nine first-innings wickets standing, are 331 runs behind Worcestershire (4).	
Worcestershire won toss	
Worcestershire - First Innings (Overnight: 435 for 4)	
T M Moody b Johnson	132
D A Leatherdale b Shah	137
15 J Rhodes not out	57
Extras (b, w, nb)	29
Total (for 6, 161.5 overs)	527
Fall (cont): 5-436, 6-627.	
Did not bat: S R Lampitt, R K Kingworth, P J Newport, A Shrivast.	
Score at 120 overs: 470 for 7.	
Bowling: Hewitt 27-5-105-2; Johnson 29-7-105-1; Blanchett 26-1-25-1; Kettleborough 4-0-15-0; Tufnell 40-4-58-1; Woodles 25-0-66-0; Shah 85-0-46-1.	
Middlesex - First Innings	
R A Kettleborough b Newport	5
J Langer not out	47
M R Ramprakash not out	38
Extras (b, w, nb)	3
Total (for 1, 32.1 overs)	98
To bat: O A Shah, M W Gatting, P N Woodles, D C Nash, R L Johnson, J P Hewitt, I N Blanchett, P C R Tufnell.	
Umpires: M J Harris and T E Jeffry.	

Gloucestershire won toss	
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE - First Innings 172 (D Ripley 54; K M Curran 54).	
GLoucestershire - First Innings (Overnight: 204 for 2)	
S P James c Ripley b G P Swann	227
M J Powell c G P Swann b Bales	106
P A Cotterill c Curran b Bales	113
G P Butcher c Ripley b Rose	1
T A D Shaw c A J Swann b Mollison	1
A R Cardick c M Babsack	0
Extras (b, w, nb)	2
Total (for 2, 41.5 overs)	193
Fall: 1-43, 2-21, 3-27, 4-72.	
To bat: M Burns, G D Ross, A Van Troost, A R Cardick, M Babsack.	
Umpires: V A Holder and J W Holder.	

Sussex v Derbyshire	
HORSHAM : Derbyshire (7pts), with seven first-innings wickets standing, are 19 runs ahead of Sussex (5).	
Sussex won toss	
Sussex - First Innings (Overnight: 915 for 9)	
M Powell not out	136
R J Kilner not out	7
Extras (b, w, nb)	21
Total (112.1 overs)	325
Bowling: Cork 28-7-77-4; DeFreitas 20-1-4-3; Dean 28-1-60-2; Lacey 12-3-33-0; Caesar 19-0-55-0; Blackwell 4-2-5-0.	
DERBYSHIRE - First Innings	
A S Pollard c A Khan b Jarvis	35
T A Twiss c Carpenter b Lacey	11
K J Barnett not out	145
M E Cresser not out	120
Extras (b, w, nb)	10
Total (for 3, 84.1 overs)	344
Fall: 1-4, 2-40, 3-108.	
To bat: D Cork, P K M Kilders, P A J DeFreitas, K J Dean, S J Lacey, I D Blackwell.	
Umpires: N T Pews and A Clarkson.	

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE - First Innings (Overnight: 71 for 2)	
M P Downman c Brown b Giddins	44
P Johnson c Frost b Sheikhi	45
M A Gile c Lann b Sheikhi	1
G M Tully c Frost b Giddins	12
P J Franks b Brown	33
T W M Noon retired hurt	18
P A Strong not out	16
M N Bowen b Giddins	18
A R Oram b Giddins	0
Extras (b, w, nb)	20
Total (for 4 overs)	217
Fall (cont): 3-106, 4-108, 5-118, 6-130, 7-171, 8-216, 9-216.	
Bowling: Giddins 22-4-67-4; Brown 22-3-77-3; Walsh 20-3-63-0; Sheikhi 10-2-16-2; Edmond 3-1-7-0.	
WARWICKSHIRE - Second Innings	
M J Powell not out	31
T Frost c Johnson b Downman	40
D L Hamp c Johnson b Bowen	4
"B C Lann not out	10
Extras (b, w, nb)	9
Total (for 2, 34.3 overs)	94
Fall: 1-63, 2-80.	
To bat: D P Oxtord, D R Brown, M M K Smith, G Welch, M A Sheikhi, I M Edmond, E S H Giddins.	
Umpires: G I Burgess and A A Jones.	

Today's fixtures

Texaco Trophy (One day, 1045)

OLD TRAFFORD: England v South Africa.

Tomorrow's fixtures

Texaco Trophy (One day, 1045)

HEADINGLEY: England v South Africa.

MINOR COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIP (Two days, 11.0): Hants CC: Berkshire v Dorset; Shropshire: Devon v Somerset; Shropshire: Devon v Somerset.

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Premier passion stirs Charlton's happy family

Rupert Cornwell on the community club aiming to rejoin the upper class in Monday's play-off

FOR Peter Varney, Charlton Athletic season ticket holder since 1960, the darkest hour came one snowy midweek night in 1974. Rochdale were the visitors, Charlton were in what was then the Third Division, and 3,000 wretched souls were scattered around the crumbling, desolate expanses of The Valley. Back in 1938, a record 75,031 had filled the old place for a game, but spiritually and physically, the club that grew from the bowels of south-east London to be home to footballing gods like Sam Bartram, Jimmy Seed and Eddie Firmani, was dying.

A decade later Charlton went bankrupt, and almost out of existence. In 1985 they left the Valley. The ground turned into an archaeological site, a sporting Pompeii a stone's throw from the Woolwich Ferry, lost beneath a jungle of weeds. Long years of exile followed, first at Selhurst Park and then at Upton Park. A generation of supporters were lost, without even the guarantee the club would ever return to SE7, as Greenwich Council rejected the redevelopment plan put forward by the club's new owners.

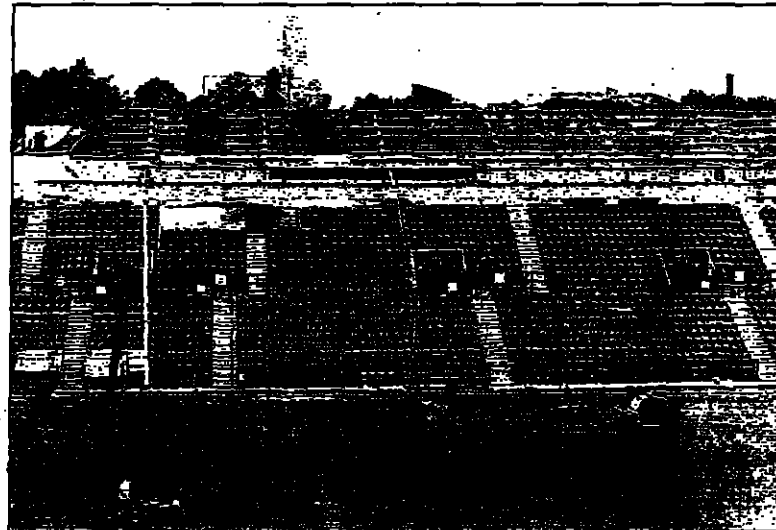
Today Varney is Charlton's managing director. And if his club defeat Sunderland in the First Division play-off final on Monday, the Addicks - a nickname said to derive from a local fishmonger's habit of giving the players free haddock and chips when they won - could be in the Premiership. One of the true fairy-tales of modern football would be complete.

For the fairy-tale's origins, look to the improbable setting of the Greenwich borough elections of 1990 when, as surely never before or since in the history of this island, football became politics. Exasperated and despairing, the fans formed the Valley party with the sole platform of bringing Charlton home. It won 15,000 votes, twice as many as the Liberal Democrats. Labour Party HQ over at Walworth Road SE1 said enough was enough, planning permission was granted, and a cosy new Valley was built where the old one had stood. On 5 December, 1992, the Addicks were back and 8,000 watched as they beat Portsmouth 1-0. It was not the greatest game, but old men wept like children. The club had walked through the valley of death, and had been saved by its supporters. It owed them, and it knew it.

"This club is for the fans..." The phrase trips off the average football director's tongue, with the same ease



Changing seasons: 1956 (above): A packed Valley watches as Arsenal's Doug Lishman attempts to prise open the Charlton defence. 1988 (left): The crowds have long gone as weeds take over a decaying and deserted ground. 1998 (right): Boom time as building work reflects the renaissance of the club saved by its supporters. Photographs: Allsport and Robert Hallam



that he jacks up season ticket prices. In Charlton's case, it happens to be true. What other club has a board member chosen by, and representing, the fans? At what other club would you find the chairman - Martin Simon, a retired oil executive who lives a couple of miles away in Blackheath - dropping by to hand out leaflets about Wembley to supporters queuing for play-off final tickets?

The quarrels with Greenwich are

not even a memory. Club and borough jointly operate initiatives against racism. Few local schools are without their branch of the "Junior Reds" - enthralling members, among other things, to attend home games for £1. If they can play a bit as well, they join Charlton's youth scheme and "schools of excellence" from which more than one first-teamer has graduated.

Much of the finance comes from the "Valley Gold" scheme, where the

supporters contribute £10 a month, in return for priority in booking tickets and discounts at the club shop. 2,000 fans have signed up, meaning £250,000 a year for the search for homegrown stars. The one blemish on the happy families image has been drugs - five players have tested positive in four years, the last of them Jamie Stuart, the former England Under-21 player, was sacked in December after admitting using cocaine.

Otherwise, careful husbandry rules. There are some bigish names: goalpoacher Clive Mendonca, the nimble Mark Kinsella and, most lately, the Yugoslav-Australian goalkeeper Sasa Ilic, once of Partizan Belgrade, but who a year ago was playing for the Sussex side St Leonards while completing a law degree at university. Now, with nine successive clean sheets, Ilic is putting even Bartram in the shade. But

Charlton's true pedigree remains south London - gritty, matey and street-smart, a team where the whole is far greater than the sum of its parts. Small wonder that in Alan Curbishley, a former player for the club, whose blood runs Charlton red, "this is the biggest game of my career. I was brought up on legends - Bartram, Seed, 70,000 gates and the FA Cup win of 1947. But now people are talking of the new Charlton in its own right. In terms of money and in terms of the future, this game is bigger than the Cup final."

For the fans, whatever the result, Wembley will be a celebration, attended by the biggest gathering of Addicks addicts since the 44,094 at the FA Cup fourth-round tie with Everton at the Valley in 1959.

er it. We did spend £1m on players just before the transfer deadline, but we covered it through the issue of new stock." And these days, there's no shortage of buyers. A fortnight ago Charlton shares stood at 50p; this week they were bid at 73p. The proximity of the Premiership and £5.1m of guaranteed TV revenues is one reason. But, Varney believes, not the only one. "Something strange has happened over the last 12 months. What we are seeing is the regeneration of a massive club."

Massive? Not quite the adjective that springs to mind when you survey today's tidy little ground holding barely 15,000, tucked into what was once a chalk pit cut from the hillside running down to the Thames, invisible almost until you reach the very turnstiles. But the club has a vast catchment area, stretching from London across Kent and Sussex: the Hastings supporters club alone are sending eight busloads to Wembley on Monday. A Charlton established in the Premiership could command huge support. There are plans for that too: whatever happens on Monday, an upper deck is going on the West stand, lifting capacity to 20,000. Filling in the corners would take it up to 28,000, and Varney talks seriously of a 40,000-seat Valley.

But can Charlton succeed where Bolton, Barnsley and Palace failed in 1997, and put down Premiership roots? "It's not going to be easy and we'll have to strengthen the team," Varney admits. "We're going to be careful. We'll follow the route of Leicester and Derby and you won't see 'Carlos-kick-a-ball' types coming to Charlton. But the funds will be there."

But this 21st century Charlton, is on the other side of the rainbow. In between comes the small matter of 90 minutes against Sunderland. For Curbishley, a former player for the club, whose blood runs Charlton red, "this is the biggest game of my career. I was brought up on legends - Bartram, Seed, 70,000 gates and the FA Cup win of 1947. But now people are talking of the new Charlton in its own right. In terms of money and in terms of the future, this game is bigger than the Cup final."

For the fans, whatever the result, Wembley will be a celebration, attended by the biggest gathering of Addicks addicts since the 44,094 at the FA Cup fourth-round tie with Everton at the Valley in 1959.

"The goodwill of the country is on our side," Curbishley believes. On Wembley they may beg to differ. But in the harsh, business-driven culture of contemporary football, Charlton right now are the good guys.

Win or lose, a civic reception will be held at Woolwich Town Hall on Tuesday. At most other places, they would be darning smoked salmon. Knowing Charlton, it will be haddock and chips.

Atkins happy as underdog

THE Northampton Town manager, Ian Atkins, has taken a leaf out of Alex Ferguson's book of mind games in the build-up to tomorrow's Nationwide League Second Division play-off final.

Atkins used the kind of psychological warfare the Manchester United manager is famed for when he claimed his side are "massive underdogs" going into the match against Grimsby Town. This is despite the fact that Northampton finished fourth in the table, just one place and one point below the Mariners.

Atkins feels Northampton have upset the odds to reach Wembley again just 12 months after they won promotion by beating Swansea in the Third Division play-off final. He maintains the Cobblers are small fry compared to Alan Buckley's

Grimsby team, who have already won at Wembley this season in the Auto Windscreens Shield final.

"It's brilliant to be back at Wembley, but we're massive underdogs," Atkins said. "We've been viewed as underdogs all season even though we've been in the top six for most of the time."

"Everyone expected us to be relegated straight back to the Third Division after coming up last season. But we've done it again without spending a fortune on wages or transfer fees."

It is 31 years since Northampton were as far up the league as the old Second Division, and, even though Atkins' side are possibly 90 minutes from ending that exile, he claims all the pressure is on Grimsby to win. He says the Cobblers will run out beneath

the twin towers determined to enjoy themselves.

"We feel there's no pressure on us and we're just delighted to be back again," he said.

"Grimsby are favourites because they finished third and really we're going there to enjoy the day. It's a wonderful opportunity to play in the First Division, but I don't think it will be a huge disappointment if we lose because nobody expected us to get this far."

Northampton, whose Sixfields ground holds only 7,653, will be cheered on at Wembley by a massive travelling band of 40,000 supporters as play-off fever has swept the town for the second successive year. Atkins reported no fresh injury worries, although they will again be without the long-term casualties Roy Hunter and Sean Parrish.

Seagulls stuck with the Visigoth factor

Brighton's life as the nomads of the Football League is not guaranteed to have a happy ending. Greg Wood reports

IF YOU supposed that football had finally shaved the grizzle off its chin, retrieved its civies and checked out of rehab, ready for its reintroduction to the community, then consider this. Ronen Palan, a lecturer at Sussex University, is preparing to sell his house and uproot his family as the result of a proposed development at the bottom of his road in Withdean, a suburb of Brighton. He claimed, with such grim conviction that you can only believe him, that "if I lose £30,000, I'll be happy."

The anticipated blot on his landscape is not a germ warfare research laboratory, or a nuclear power station. It is professional football, or at any rate the approximation of it which is played by Brighton & Hove Albion, the nomads of the Nationwide League. The club who have endured a miserable year of exile in Gillingham, 75 miles away from their supporters, have applied to use Withdean Stadium, an athletics track owned by the local council, as a temporary base for the next three seasons. Almost 40,000 people have signed a petition begging the council to give the plan official approval. Only the still more desperate problems of Doncaster Rovers kept Brighton in the League last season, and there is a belief that Withdean offers the team not simply their only hope of serious progress, but perhaps their best chance to avoid extinction.

In the immediate area of the stadium, however, the mood is rather different. There is fear and loathing in leafy suburbia. And there is also SWEAT, which stands for Save Withdean Environment Action Team, a hastily formed pressure group which opposes the move. To discuss the issue

with its members is to realise that for all the confident swagger about modern British football, there are still plenty of people for whom "football fan" is a synonym of Visigoth. There are, of course, some genuine and reasonable concerns, particularly with regard to the extra traffic which may be attracted to the area on match days. There are also understandable fears that, since no firm plans are in place for a new, permanent home for the Seagulls, the arrangement may not be as temporary as is claimed. Others, meanwhile, point out that while Brighton's itinerant status is unfortunate, it is a problem of their own making, since Bill Archer, the

former chairman, sold their old home at the Goldstone Ground without first arranging a long-term alternative. It is not just the locals, but also many Brighton fans, who worry that Archer, while no longer in control, remains the club's largest individual shareholder.

Yet still it is hard to credit the extent to which many Withdean residents dread the possible arrival of a football team in their midst. One leaflet which circulated in the area warned that fans would be "urinating in front gardens". There is talk of "inevitable" fights between supporters, of a community which "will break up because we will all move away from here."

It is an apocalyptic vision, but not one which is shared by the residents of another quiet, tidy middle-class residential area barely two miles distant. Where the Goldstone Ground stood for almost 100 years, a retail park is nearing completion. Toys 'R' Us and a Burger King Drive-Thru will occupy the land which once hosted Arsenal and Manchester United.

There may be some locals who were glad to see the back of the Goldstone, but if so, they were not at home on Monday morning. Among those who were, there seemed to be complete unanimity that living next door to the Seagulls had never caused any problems. Muriel Cater lived just a few

yards from the entrance to the old North Stand for 65 years. "It was never any trouble," she said, "in fact, it was very pleasant to have around."

A couple of doors further down the street, Mark Wilkins remembered that "the old lady who lived next door wasn't a football fan, but she used to love sitting in her window on match days, watching the people go past. The people in Withdean talk about having gardens smashed up and fences pulled down, but we never had any of it."

The man who is trying to persuade the residents of Withdean that their fears are groundless is Nick Rowe, Brighton's general manager. If the move is approved (12 June is likely to be decision day), he expects that most, if not all, of the 5,400 home supporters that can be accommodated at the stadium will be season-ticket holders.

"It will be almost like a contract," he said. "People will be asked to sign a code of conduct, asking them to respect the vicinity of the ground and the immediate neighbourhood at Withdean, and to use public transport of park-and-ride schemes to travel to the ground."

"If they transgress, their tickets will be suspended, but our fans are so desperate to have us back that I know they will meticulously observe the rules."

For all his efforts, many Withdean residents remain unconvinced, and similar prejudice would no doubt be exposed by an equivalent proposal in many parts of the country. Football may approach the millennium in apparent good health but, for some, it will be stuck in the 1970s forever.



The Withdean athletics stadium in Brighton: The proposed new home of Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club. Photograph: Andrew Hasson

Wales cast as poor relations

WALES will unveil two new international kits next week to underline the stark contrasts between the rich and poor of international football.

Just days after England announced a new £50m five-year link-up with Umbro, Wales will be completing the final phase of a deal with the Italian company, Lotto, that nets them less than £1m over four years.

A new red first-choice shirt, plus a "daffodil yellow" away strip, will be revealed at the team's training camp hotel near Chester.

The Football Association of Wales spokesman, Mark Evans, said: "We are half-way through a four-year deal with Lotto and this is the final change of kit. We cannot match the sort of money that England can pull in."

"Frankly it's hard to get companies interested in countries that are down in the 100s in the world rankings, which is why we object so much to the way that Fifa list is calculated

because it has a knock-on effect on many things."

Wales have been with Umbro, Adidas and Admiral in the past and are already actively looking for a new deal for the future. They are even considering the policy followed by Leicester City of marketing their own kit after the Lotto deal runs out.

Wales have decided to abandon their all-green second kit because the players had the same problem as Manchester United discovered with their infamous grey kit in a match at Southampton a couple of years ago - they could not see their colleagues properly.

It was going to be worn last year in the World Cup match in Eindhoven against the Netherlands, but a late decision was made to change to a white kit that night... and Wales still lost 7-1.

Kilmarnock were celebrating yesterday after being officially confirmed as Scotland's fourth

representatives in Europe next season. The Rugby Park outfit, who finished fourth in the Bell's Premiership, received ratification from the Scottish Football Association that they will be one of its two representatives in the UEFA Cup, alongside Rangers.

Bobby Williamson's side will be striving to better last year's European run, when they went out to the French side Nice after overcoming the Irish part-timers Shelbourne in the preliminary round of the Cup Winners' Cup.

Kilmarnock's secretary, Kevin Collins, said: "It's a sign of the club's progress. We're now looking forward to our sixth consecutive year in the Premiership and the fans are obviously very excited by the prospect of playing in the UEFA Cup."

To qualify for it is probably a better achievement than reaching the Cup-Winners' Cup last year.

Time for England veil to be lifted

By Glenn Moore
Football Correspondent

THE veil goes up on Glenn Hoddle's World Cup preparations today as he begins the final phase of England's build-up. This afternoon, at Wembley, Hoddle should field the core of the team he wants to start the finals against Tunisia in Marseilles on 15 June, together with a number of players who either have to prove their fitness or need matches to regain it.

Coming into both categories is Paul Gascoigne who, having nearly skewered himself with a

series of further indiscretions, will, as so often, be the centre of attention. Darren Anderton will not be far behind, but Jamie Redknapp will not be in contention. He withdrew from the squad yesterday with a knee injury. Redknapp added that he had been invited to travel with the England party to the finals by Hoddle.

The World Cup 22 will be named on 2 June and, with the likes of Gianfranco Zola, David Ginola and Juninho already set to miss out on France 98, few are taking a place for granted. With Ian Wright, Les Ferdinand and Tim Flowers also needing match-

es, and the likes of Rio Ferdinand, Rob Lee, Dion Doherty and Phil Neville still with much to prove, the team-sheet could be as interesting as the match.

That should be a one-sided affair. Saudi Arabia did draw with England in Riyadh 10 years ago and have just qualified for their second successive World Cup, but they are not a strong side. The Riyadh match was against a disjointed England team, featuring five debutants, during a low period of Bobby Robson's management. It did include Tony Adams, who scored, and David Seaman, who made a disappointing debut, but

Wembley, prior to a World Cup, should be a different matter.

The Saudis' warm-up programme has included a series of undistinguished displays including narrow wins over Namibia and Australia, a draw with Iceland, 3-0 home defeats to Germany and Brazil and a 5-0 drubbing, also in Riyadh, by Mexico. That match, in the Intercontinental Cup in December, was the last before Carlos Parreira, who coached Brazil to victory in the last World Cup, took over on a £2m contract.

As that deal illustrates, even the Premiership is penurious compared to the oil-rich king-

dom and it is this wealth which has raised doubts about the fixture's arrangement.

The official line is that the Saudis, having a similar style to Tunisia, are ideal opponents. However, England fly to the Mediterranean on Monday to play Morocco, who are even more similar to their north African neighbours, on Wednesday. This would appear to make the Saudi match, already unlikely to tell us much about the England players' form and international capability, even less worthwhile.

Since England are not short of requests for Wembley friend-

lies the fixture has given rise to a number of rumours, most notably that it was arranged at the request, or at least the prompting, of the Government. New Labour has been very helpful over the World Cup 2006 bid. It is also eager to maintain the valuable but sensitive relationship with Saudi Arabia.

This suggestion has been categorically denied by the Football Association and it is true that the fixture was arranged before the Morocco one, and that there is a precedent for having an undemanding friendly before a major tournament – a Hong Kong Select XI and non-League

Aylesbury have been previous opponents.

Nevertheless, it appears a special visit. Opposing delegations are usually treated to a pre-match lunch at a West End hotel. The Saudis were instead guests at the Guildhall, the City of London's most prestigious venue, last night. Tonight they host a reciprocal function at the Dorchester. No doubt further trade negotiations, following a recently concluded £20bn arms deal, will be facilitated.

Coincidentally, 12 hours before the Saudi team flew into Heathrow on Thursday, the two British nurses, who have

been released early from their prison sentences in a Saudi jail, arrived at Gatwick.

Assuming he did want the fixture none of this should trouble Hoddle – with Gascoigne, faith healers and marketing rows he has enough diplomatic problems with football. A side issue is how England's players react to Paul Durkin's refereeing tuition, but the main thing is the result and performance. For a number of reasons the convincing victory England are very capable of would be very welcome.

ENGLAND (Possibly, 3-0-0): Flowers; Ginola, Adams, Campbell, Anderton, Barry, Gascoigne, Ince, P. Neville, Sheringham, Wright.

Back on a wing and a prayer

For the Spur nicknamed 'Sick Note' the season is just beginning. Clive White on Darren Anderton's fight to be in France

WHATEVER tactical differences Glenn Hoddle and his predecessor as England coach Terry Venables may have, the two men seemingly agreed on one thing: a fit Darren Anderton is crucial to England's international success.

There is a feeling of déjà vu about the Tottenham's midfielder's call up which could get quite spooky should he be selected for today's match against Saudi Arabia and score. Two years ago, just prior to Euro '96, he was also coming back from injury, on that occasion straight from a seven month lay-off, when Venables, as Hoddle has done now, selected him despite his inactivity. Anderton

scored in the friendly against Hungary and went on to figure prominently in England's glorious failure in the finals. While Anderton has yet to play for Hoddle, his England debut was Venables' first game in charge. That

was against Denmark at Wembley in 1994, when the young Spur produced, in the words of Ossie Ardiles, the then Tottenham manager "the most impressive international debut I have ever seen".

The former Portsmouth player, of course, had been signed by Venables when he was manager at White Hart Lane, for what now seems a paltry £1.75m. "He makes goals, he scores goals and his all-round contribution is excellent," Venables once said. "From the first time I saw Darren I thought he had the potential to be an outstanding international player."

Now, as then, there has been accusations against the England management of a bias towards Spurs players which can not make Anderton's return to the

international fold any easier. Matt Le Tissier, for one, must be wondering what he did wrong, most pertinently in last month's B international against Russia when he and Anderton both pulled on their first England shirt in a long while and the Southampton player weighed in with a hat-trick yet failed to make Hoddle's squad of 30.

Certainly Hoddle has given the player with the unfortunate sobriquet of 'Sick Note' – kindly bestowed on him by former Pompey team-mate Lee Gosling – every chance to attain full fitness. Even Anderton conceded that he was "a little bit surprised" by the call-up, adding somewhat tartly, "considering that

four weeks ago I couldn't get in the Tottenham team." Like Les Ferdinand, his run-ins with the Spurs coach, Christian Gross, over the thorny question of fitness provided a distracting sideshow to Tottenham's struggles last season. Eventually

he persuaded Gross to allow him to play in the last two games – "I couldn't expect Glenn to pick me on my performance for the reserves" – and fortunately for Anderton it was enough to persuade Hoddle that he was not a lost cause.

Indeed, the former Spurs' faith in the player has put some Paxton Road end diehards to shame. "You'll always get a few who think your hearts not in it," Anderton said. "It's hurtful, because though Tottenham have been very good to me I think I've also been good to Tottenham. When I got the opportunity to go to Manchester United I stayed when everyone else went on their way."

With the injuries he has had – four hernia and one groin operations – it is as well that he is



Tottenham's Darren Anderton: Back to fitness and back in the England fold

Photograph: Brendan Monks

the naturally fit type, which may have something to do with the fact that he was a cross-country champion for Hampshire as a boy. "We've given him some real tests and he's flying," said Hoddle. Him and Rio [Ferdinand] came through a couple of runs with the other boys and they looked the strongest. Darren doesn't stand still, even in the eight-a-sides and keep-ball sessions. He's always on his toes and I tell you that takes some doing."

He has not had the best of luck with some of his operations, describing himself as a guinea

pig on one occasion. "There will be times after a game when I would feel stiff but I didn't want to say anything otherwise I'd be slaughtered," he said. "It's not nice, all I wanted to do was play. The worst times were when I was coming back to fitness and doing okay only to suffer little breakdowns. But I never wrote off my chances of making the World Cup."

Still coltish looking despite his 26 years, he is now confident that he has fully recovered, but while the season may just be starting for him, just as it was two years ago, he accepts that

it could all be over in a week if he does not make the final 22. But, while according to him he is thrashing the ball about with gusto in training, Hoddle has detected a certain tentativeness in his play.

"He's happy to do the simple things at the moment, which is what happens when you've been out for a long time," Hoddle said. "Your first thought is whether the injury is going to go again. You don't concentrate on what you're trying to achieve with the ball. He's not back to his very, very best but he can become that. He needs a run-out

over the next three games. He needs a tempo."

His former Spurs team-mate, Teddy Sheringham, for one would welcome the service of a player whom he once described as the best crosser in the Premiership. But Anderton nowadays regards himself, as Hoddle probably does, as more of a playmaker than an out-and-out winger. "When I was a kid I always played central midfield anyway," he said. "Glenn Hoddle was one of my favourite players."

The feelings look as though they could be mutual.

Parreira revels in mind game against Hoddle

Adam Szreter meets the Saudi coach who quit at the top with Brazil to do it his way

FOR Glenn Hoddle the World Cup is, apart from anything else, an opportunity to pit his relatively youthful managerial wit against some of the best in the business. While England's supporters, and Hoddle himself, will ultimately only be concerned with the results, for the coach it is also a chance to put his footballing philosophy and theories to the test against people like Bert Vogts of Germany, Aimé Jacquet of France, Cesare Maldini of Italy and Mario Zagallo of Brazil.

Hoddle should get a taste of things to come this afternoon, when England play Saudi Arabia at Wembley. It is a game England are expected to win comfortably, despite the Saudis' impressive showing at USA '94 when they beat Belgium and Morocco on their way to the second round. Hoddle's opposite number today may be a relatively recent appointment, but he happens to be the man who coached Brazil to the World Cup four years ago, with Zagallo as his No 2.

Carlos Alberto Parreira never received the sort of acclaim for his achievement that Zagallo enjoyed when his first Brazilian side, featuring Pele at the height of his powers, won the 1970 World Cup in Mexico. The 1994 vintage was successful, but it failed to grab the public's imagination long before a particularly drab final against Italy which Brazil eventually won on penalties. After 24 years of glorious failure, Parreira had delivered what his fellow countrymen wanted most of all, yet it was still deemed not enough and, not surprisingly, he quit. "It was a personal decision," he explained to an eager audience after steering his present charges through their practice routine at Wembley on Thursday night.

"Three years and a half with the Brazilian team is too much, especially when they were not winning since 24 years. The pressure was so big, I would say it was not human to be there. I suffered a lot inside. I was strong enough to resist the pressure and do it my way, and it would not have changed over the next four years or so I said, 'why?'"

"This is just sport, it's not life or death, it's just soccer, so it was a very conscious decision and I've had no regrets at all. I was honoured to be invited back by Saudi Arabia, they are a very proud team and the World Cup is the big stage for coaches and players. If you are with Brazil

or England or Saudi Arabia it's the same competition."

In stark contrast to his illustrious namesake Carlos Alberto who captained the 1970 side, Parreira never played professionally. He began coaching in Ghana before taking Kuwait to the 1982 World Cup finals. The following year he took over the Brazilian national side but lasted less than a year and did not resurface on the international stage until 1990 when he coached the United Arab Emirates at Italia '90.

The UAE had qualified for that tournament under Zagallo, while Parreira was enjoying his first stint in charge of Saudi Arabia, and in the following year he was back home, succeeding Falcão as Brazil's coach once more. His route to Wembley today has been equally circuitous, taking in Valencia in Spain, Sao Paulo in Brazil and most recently the New York/New Jersey MetroStars in America before returning to take charge of the Saudis upon their qualification for France.

The odds against him repeating the feats of 1994 are incalculable, but Parreira seems blessed with the kind of abundant enthusiasm, optimism and intelligence that would be an asset to any side. "We don't compare times in soccer, the last World Cup was in America, it was four years ago and this time it is in Europe. But we have the condition to repeat what we did four years back."

"The team has experience, they're not unknown any more in the world, people will look at them more carefully now and I think we are ready to try to repeat what we did there. I feel they are very confident and very relaxed and this team rises for the occasion, they're not afraid to play which is very good. They have personality."

Unlike or any of his players, Parreira has experienced Wembley before as the Brazilian manager in 1992. It was a 1-1 draw then, but a similar result today would be worth much more to him. "This is going to be a real test for us," he said. "To play England here at Wembley is good for any team. We don't have to be scared or fear the game, we just have to come here, have fun and enjoy it. This will give us a real assessment of what we need for the World Cup. After playing England here at Wembley, we don't have to fear anything else in the World Cup."

Crewe goalkeeper's dream of France becomes a nightmare


AROUND
THE
WORLD
BY
RUPERT
METCALF

Nigeria
FOR poor Ademola Bankole, the World Cup dream lasted just two days. Crewe Alexandra's goalkeeper was dropped from Nigeria's World Cup squad on Thursday – just two days after he had been picked in the provisional party for the finals in France.

On Tuesday Nigeria's coach Bora Milutinovic included Bankole in a list of 29 players, which will be reduced to 22 by the 2 June deadline for finalising squads. The Crewe player was one of four goalkeepers in a party which was without two experienced custodians: Ike Shorunmu, who broke an

arm last week, and Peter Rufai, who was overlooked.

That same Tuesday night the Nigerians lost 4-0 to Grasshopper Zurich in a warm-up match in Switzerland – and Bankole, who let in all four goals, including two scored by Manchester City's on-loan Georgian striker Mikhail Kavalashvili, carried the can.

"Bankole was sacked by Milutinovic from the squad for conceding cheap goals," Austin Mgbogu, of the Nigerian Football Association, said on Thursday. The coach has been under fire in Nigeria for overlooking stalwarts like Rufai – who may now be recalled – and Samson Siasia.

Colombia
THE former Newcastle United striker Faustino Asprilla has threatened to pull out of Colombia's World Cup squad because of death threats made towards a team-mate.

Victor Hugo Aristizabal has insisted that he will not quit the squad despite having his life threatened by an anonymous telephone caller last weekend. The coach, Hernan Dario Gomez, also received a warning. "I'm not going to back down. I love playing for the national team," Aristizabal said. He has not been a regular for his Brazilian club, São Paulo, and his selection for the squad

ahead of other contenders from Colombian sides caused some surprise.

His fellow forward, Asprilla, who now plays in Italy for Parma, said: "If the threats to Aristizabal turn out to be true and he doesn't go to the World Cup, then I'm not going either."

Romania

THE Romania coach, Anghel Iordanescu, who is quitting his job after the World Cup to take over the Greek national team, is still squabbling with his football federation.

Iordanescu is currently doctored with his players in a training camp at Poiana Brasov in

northern Romania. The venue was not the first choice of the coach, who had wanted to take his charges to a site in Switzerland, far from the prying eyes of the Romanian press. His request was refused by the federation, which said it did not have the money.

Romania are to play two friendlies in Bucharest against Paraguay on 3 June and Moldova on 6 June. Iordanescu has complained that these opponents are too weak to offer his team suitable preparation.

Brazil

MILLIONS of Brazilians watched their World Cup

squad leave for France on Thursday, as television stations interrupted regular programmes for live pictures of the team's plane taking off from Rio airport.

There were no repeats of the previous World Cup's controversy, when the names of players were printed on each seat, upsetting Romario when he was placed between two other players. He insisted he preferred to travel by the window, sparking a controversy which required intervention from Ricardo Teixeira, the president of the Brazilian football confederation. This time the seat with "Romario" stamped on it was next to the window.


18
DAYS
UNTIL THE
WORLD
CUP FINALS
BEGIN

هلذا من الامام

Brown set to take friendlies seriously

Football

By Phil Shaw
in New York

DURING nearly five years of Craig Brown's management, Scotland's record in non-competitive fixtures has been as dismal as their performance in reaching the finals of major tournaments is impressive.

In tonight's penultimate World Cup warm-up game against Colombia in the Giants Stadium, they will attempt to purge the tendency towards taking friendly matches too literally. Away from their successes in qualifying campaigns, Scotland have won only four and lost nine of their 15 games under Brown. The victories, moreover, were all single-goal affairs, against Austria, Ecuador, Malta and Australia, scarcely the most encouraging pedigree with which to confront one of South America's leading sides.

However, by naming a team which is likely to resemble closely his line-up for the opening match of France '98 against Brazil, Brown effectively acknowledged yesterday that the time for experimentation is all over. Tonight's result may not have any long-term significance, but it would clearly be psychologically disadvantageous to go into the World Cup with defeats by Colombia and the United States behind them.

Brown was already committed to using his third-choice

goalkeeper, Neil Sullivan. Otherwise, he had intimated that the team would be a full-strength one, only to lose his only proven scorer at international level, Kevin Gallacher, to a stomach upset.

Darren Jackson, who should at least be fresh after a season largely spent warming the bench at Celtic, steps in to form an Old Firm striking partnership with Gordon Durie. But it is in midfield that Scotland's dependence on the new champions is most conspicuous.

Three of the quintet normally wear the Celtic shamrock. The most significant selection is that of Craig Burley in the central role where his performances earned him the accolade of being the Scottish Football Writers' Player of the Year. Brown normally uses the former Chelsea player as a wing-back, yet his form for Celtic has evidently persuaded the manager to accommodate him in a unit that must compensate for the loss of Gary McAllister.

"We've used Craig there before, during the World Cup match against Sweden at Ibrox, and also in the Under 21s," Brown said. "We're well aware of his capabilities."

Brown also reported that Jackie McNamara had finally shaken off a nagging ankle problem. John Collins, expected to share McAllister's creative mantle with Burley, is short of match practice after a toe injury, but is too important to the



Craig Brown has turned to the Celtic striker Darren Jackson to provide the firepower against Colombia tonight

Photograph: Craig Halkett

Brown's plans not to start tonight's game.

Colombia are one of England's group opponents next month and will be monitored on Glenn Hoddle's behalf by Kenny Sansom, the former Arsenal and Crystal Palace full-back. They provided Scotland's last

test before Euro '96, winning 1-0 in a Miami monsoon, and have brought a squad brimming with familiar names.

Faustino Asprilla, the match-winner that night, is expected to play, despite his reported concern over alleged death threats to Colombian

players and officials. The 36-year-old Carlos Valderrama, he of the hair that resembles an exploding root vegetable, is also likely to pull the midfield strings.

Brown said: "Colombia's record in qualifying was pretty useful, with eight wins and four draws out of 16 matches. They

score goals freely, but they're defensively vulnerable and the goalkeeper Oscar Cordoba, is brilliant but erratic.

"I've studied the video of their game against Yugoslavia. Cordoba was sent off after half an hour but they still drew 0-0. Asprilla's obviously a danger."

SCOTLAND (3-5-2): Sullivan (Widenedon); Calderwood (Tottenham), Hendry (Blackburn), Boyd (Celtic); McNamara (Celtic), Burley (Celtic), Lambert (Celtic), Collins (Monaco), Durie (Derby); Jackson (Celtic), Durie (Preston).
COLOMBIA (Probable 4-4-2): O Cordoba (Boca Juniors); Bermudez (Boca), Cabrera (Independiente Medellin), Mendez (Medellin), Galindo (Atletico Junior); Sierra (Atletico Nacional), Valderrama (Miami Fusion), Rincon (Corinthians), Perez (Juventus), De Ariza (New York/New Jersey MetroStars), Asprilla (Parma).

McCarthy sees the future

ROBBIE KEANE and Damien Duff, have been given the chance to enhance their growing international reputations for the Republic of Ireland when they face Mexico at Lansdowne Road today.

The Republic's coach, Mick McCarthy, had no hesitation in naming the two teenagers in his starting line-up against the World Cup qualifiers.

It is one of the youngest sides ever to represent the Republic - it has an average age of just 22 - and McCarthy said: "This side does not reflect the team I would hope to play against Croatia in our opening European Championship game in September. But it represents a

good opportunity for many of our young players to show their ability at this level."

The Leeds captain Gary Kelly and the Liverpool centre-half Phil Babb are the only survivors from the 22-man squad which played in the World Cup in America in 1994.

Since taking over from Jack Charlton two years ago, McCarthy has lost 10 and won just six of his 23 internationals in charge, though he has been hit by a lot of bad luck.

Indeed, missing from the Dublin line-up today will be Jeff Kenna, Kenny Cunningham, Steve Staunton, Denis Irwin, Jason McAteer, Niall Quinn and Mark Kinsella.

McCarthy added: "It's unnatural the number of call-offs from the squad, but they are all genuine. Some of those who will play against Mexico are on stand-by but it's a great experience for them to be in the squad."

"This will definitely be a competitive game," McCarthy said. "We have no affinity with the Mexicans and it's the ideal opportunity for my young squad to show that they can perform at the highest level."

Mexico defeated the Irish 2-1 in the World Cup finals in the States four years ago. Two years later the teams drew 2-2 in the USA Cup, with Niall Quinn and Liam Daish both

shown the red card and McCarthy also ordered from the bench in New Jersey.

Mexico will be hoping to bounce back after a disastrous 5-2 defeat by Norway in Oslo on Wednesday, with their coach, Manuel Lapuente, set to recall the veteran goalkeeper Jorge Campos and his top striker, Luis Garcia.

It was Garcia who scored both goals against the Republic in Orlando four years ago and then repeated that double-strike performance against McCarthy's men in 1996.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND (Probable 3-5-2): McCarthy (Widenedon); Keane (Blackburn), Duff (Blackburn), Kenna (Widenedon), Collins (Monaco), Durie (Derby); Jackson (Celtic), Durie (Preston).

FA charges Batty with misconduct

DAVID BATTY is in further trouble with the Football Association after being charged with misconduct.

The combative Newcastle United and England midfielder is alleged to have pushed the referee David Elleray after being sent off for the third time this season at Blackburn Rovers on 10 May.

Batty, who is with Glenn Hoddle's squad preparing for the World Cup, is already ruled out for the first five matches of next term, following three dismissals. He now faces the possibility of an additional one-match suspension if found guilty of misconduct.

The FA spokesman, Adrian Bevington, said: "David Batty has been charged with misconduct relating to an incident which occurred following his sending-off by Mr Elleray at Blackburn. He has 14 days to respond and request a personal hearing."

Batty, 29, was dismissed at Ewood Park for allegedly punching the Rovers midfielder Garry Flitcroft, and intends to use video evidence to prove his innocence.

Batty's other two dismissals during the season came against Aston Villa and Derby County. Ironically, the combative midfielder had never been sent off in his career before he joined Newcastle in February 1996.

Liverpool line up £2m Dundee

ROY EVANS, the Liverpool manager, is closing in on the South African-born striker Sean Dundee in a £2m deal.

Representatives of the Anfield club are in Germany attempting to tie up the transfer of the Karlsruhe player. Evans needs cover up front, with Robbie Fowler likely to be out until Christmas with his knee injury.

Dundee is on offer because Karlsruhe, after their relegation from the Bundesliga First Division, need to off-load their high-wage earners. After taking out German citizenship, the 25-year-old forced his way into their international squad, but injuries and a dip in form means he will not make Bert Vogts' final 22 for France '98.

Evans is expected to recoup his outlay on Dundee by selling the Czech midfielder Patrik Berger to Roma for £3.5m next week. Liverpool could also off-load Neil Ruddock to West Ham and are also willing to let Michael Thomas leave.

The Everton manager, Howard Kendall, has confirmed his interest in the Derby County midfielder Lee Carseley. The tough-tackling Republic of Ireland international is Kendall's latest target, after also admitting that Bolton's Alan Thompson is on his wanted list.

"Midfield is an area where I'm looking to strengthen and Carseley is a player I admire,"

Kendall said. "I have spoken to Derby manager Jim Smith."

Tottenham's former Italian international midfielder, Nicola Berti has agreed a new one-year deal with the White Hart Lane club. The 30-year-old arrived in January on a free transfer from Internazionale.

Bristol City have signed the Gillingham striker Ade Akinbiyi for a club-record £1.2m. The fee more than doubled the previous highest they had paid: £500,000 for Andy Cole in 1992.

Akinbiyi, the former Norwich striker, scored 22 goals for the Gills in 1997-98, having joined the Kent club in January last year.

Kit Symons is on the brink of taking a 50 per cent pay cut to stay with relegated Manchester City. The 27-year-old defender, with his current contract at an end, was initially upset by City's offer of a new one-year deal that slashed his £4,000-a-week wages in half, but in the absence of any better offers he looks likely to stay at Maine Road.

Sasa Ilic, Charlton Athletic's Yugoslav goalkeeper, will be watched by two members of Yugoslavia's coaching staff at the Nationwide League First Division play-off final against Sunderland on Monday. A good performance could earn him a late call up to the Yugoslav World Cup squad for this summer's finals.

De Bruin heading for legal battle

Swimming

By Guy Hodgson

MICHELLE DE BRUIN, who has ploughed through as much suspicion and innuendo as water for two years, appeared yesterday to be heading for a lengthy legal battle to clear her name of a charge that she tried to manipulate a drugs test. If she fails, she could be banned from swimming for life.

The solicitor for Ireland's triple Olympic champion has revealed the B test on the urine sample she gave had confirmed the findings of the A sample, which contained a potentially lethal dose of alcohol.

Her case is now expected to come before the doping panel of swimming's international governing body, Fina, next month, but even if she is found guilty it is not likely to be the end of the matter.

The 28-year-old, who as Michelle Smith won three gold medals at the Atlanta Olympics, has said she would then appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland, while a further move into the civil courts cannot be ruled out.

De Bruin's defence is likely to rest on her call for the governing body to prove that she was the one who manipulated the sample.

Her solicitor, Peter Lennon, who watched the analysis of the twin samples in the International Olympic Committee-accredited laboratory in Barcelona that carried out the original test, said: "It appears clear at this time that our client can only be charged with physical manipulation and not the use of any banned substance. We do not expect there to be any change between the adulteration results of the A and B sample."

The Dublin-born swimmer added that she was "more determined than ever" to fight any charges that may be formally brought against her.

Fina said yesterday they had not received the result of the back-up test, but a spokesman confirmed De Bruin could face a life ban for tampering with a test. There could be no retrospective punishment over her Olympic gold medals, however.

A Fina spokesman said: "The swimmer's solicitor can say what he wants, but we have not yet had the result from the laboratory, and until we do, we cannot comment."

"When we have the result, we will tell the swimmer first. We will then announce whether the matter will go before the doping panel. The penalty will be at the discretion of the panel, but for manipulation of a test it can be from zero to life."

De Bruin underwent an out-of-competition test on January 10 at Kilkenny in Ireland, when Fina said the A sample showed "unequivocal signs of adulteration" and "physical manipulation".

Prince Alexandre de Merode, chairman of the IOC's medical commission, said the sample included a potentially lethal concentration of alcohol, and that alcohol could be used to mask the presence of banned drugs. De Bruin has denied tampering with her test, and said any manipulation must have taken place after it was out of her sight.

In the past De Bruin has said: "My success is down to one thing - hard work." Now she must labour to prove her innocence.

Baggio attributes recall to willpower

ROBERTO BAGGIO says he is returning to the World Cup finals determined to help Italy win the tournament at his third attempt.

Baggio, Italy's hero of USA '94 until the final, was named in coach Cesare Maldini's squad for France '98 this week, a year after he last played for the national side.

"More than anything else, just let me say how happy I am," the Bologna forward said. "I'd been wishing and hoping to go to the World Cup finals."

"In the last few months, there were times when I felt that I would make it, and there were times when I wasn't so

sure, when I was frightened I wasn't doing enough to convince Maldini."

"But in the end I think sheer willpower - the desire to overcome every obstacle - was the deciding factor. And I think that my recent performances, and the goals, dispelled the final doubts. I'd like to dedicate this call-up to all the people who had faith in me, even during the difficult times. Not just Bologna fans, but also the supporters of other clubs."

Baggio could not gauge the importance of his widespread popular support for his return to the national fold. "You'll have to ask Maldini about that," he

said. "I've tried to earn it on the pitch. Cesare has known me for a long time and, if he's made this decision, it's because he thinks a player with my characteristics could be useful."

Baggio spared a thought for the man he may have to replace in France '98, Alessandro Del Piero, who has a thigh injury and may now miss the finals. "I hope he recovers as soon as possible," said Baggio of his former Juventus team-mate. "I've said it before and I'll say it again, in our role Ale is the better player, partly because he has youth on his side. I'm just happy to be going, and I don't like the idea of benefiting from other people's

bad luck. My job is just to be ready. As and when I'm needed, I'll be there to play my part."

That part has inevitably changed over the years. Maldini's concern last summer was just how suited Baggio was to the hustle and bustle of modern football after a disappointing two-year spell at Milan.

Baggio's personal record of 22 goals this season answered that question, but he admitted: "I've had to adapt to today's more muscular game. It's a sign of the times - 15 years ago you could still be a soloist. That said, putting all the different interpretations to one side, football is still football."

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**Gard
theft
grow
area**

England vell. page 24

Jansen has also been linked with the job. Yesterday he returned home to the Netherlands to contemplate his future after his acrimonious departure from Celtic. He has already turned down an approach to coach Vitesse Arnhem and it is believed he is not interested in taking over at Hillsborough, with many offers from across Europe pouring in for his services.



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YOUR MONEY

Personal finance, motoring and property

Saturday 23 May 1998

Garden theft, a growth area

Thieves may target not only the inside of your house but also the outside. Your household insurance policy is unlikely to cover the damage, as Paul Slade discovers

It is easy to spend thousands of pounds on plants and decoration for your garden, as visitors to this week's Chelsea Flower Show have seen. It is equally easy to lose them. From a burglar or a vandal's point of view, a garden offers easy pickings and far less risk than breaking into your house.

The most ambitious thieves may go so far as to roll up a freshly turfed lawn and take that away. There have even been cases of whole garden ponds – complete with fountains and fish – being stolen.

A standard house and contents policy may give as little as £250 cover for the loss of items such as plants or garden furniture, which will not be much help for big losses like these.

Ian Frater of Commercial Union says: "It's something that, a few years ago, you would never have imagined happening. Shrubs are costing a lot more, people are putting more expensive items in their gardens, and they are getting stolen."

David Jones is a director of JSJ Insurance Services, a Manchester financial adviser which offers a specialist garden insurance policy called Plantsmans Plus. He says: "We got some figures from Yorkshire Police when we set this contract up, and they were dealing with something like £4m a year of

theft from gardens.

"There really was some very expensive stuff gone. There's a lot of antique and semi-antique stuff in gardens now, and it's an obvious target for thieves."

Mr Jones recalls one recent Plantsmans Plus claim of £10,000 from the owner of a large garden who had 14 statues stolen. One of Commercial Union's policyholders recently had a sundial worth £1,400 stolen. But anything from rose bushes to lawn mowers may also go missing.

Mr Frater says: "Let's say you leave the lawn mower lying on the front lawn while you go in to have lunch. Somebody might jump over the fence and nick the lawn mower. These are the sort of things that can happen."

Bonsai are another popular target. Mr Jones says: "Most of them are put outside on display. They're quite small, relatively easy to move, and very expensive. You just tuck them under your arm, and away you go." JSJ gives a 5 per cent discount to Bonsai owners who fit a microchip to identify their prize plant if it gets stolen.

Car boot sales seem to be a popular way to sell the stolen goods on. Norfolk police recently reported that their raids on local car boot sales had uncovered a lot of stolen shrubs.

Commercial Union and Legal & General both offer £500 of cover for items left outside as part of their standard house and contents plans. Norwich Union, which underwrites the JSJ plan, offers £1,000 for policyholders over 55. Plantsman Plus itself gives £100 of cover for every £2.50 spent in premiums (including insurance premium tax) with a minimum premium of £50. The policy gives cover for fire, theft, vandalism and lightning.

Most standard house and contents policies will include cover for structural items such as footpaths, walls or gates. The contents element will cover



property locked away in garages or sheds, although perhaps only up to a certain limit. L&G, for example, pays out up to 5 per cent of your total household contents cover for goods lost from outbuildings. Mr Jones recommends

photographing expensive items. "Photographs do make life easier in the event of a claim."

This neatly underlines one central point. As with so much of personal finance, garden insurance is all about planning for the future.

Theft object: no man is safe these days in the garden, as thieves home in on a lucrative market

Photograph: Jean-Marc Truchet/Tony Stone

Seal of approval that doesn't offer security

The aim is to make saving simpler and cheaper but it may increase the risks, says Andrew Verity

When the Treasury brought out its latest plan to encourage low earners to save this week, one high earner – bearded, with a toothy grin and open-necked shirt – was especially pleased.

Richard Branson's happiness sprang from a plan to give government endorsement to savings products just like the one offered by his own firm Virgin Direct. His mood was in stark contrast to the rest of the investment industry.

In a consultation document titled "Making Saving Easy", the Treasury took an unprecedented step in its drive to encourage all of us to save more. It proposed to give a stamp of approval – a benchmark – to savings vehicles which are simple, cheap and accessible.

Savings companies will be able to display the benchmark only if they offer an Individual Savings Account that meets prescribed standards. When it is introduced in April, the ISA will offer tax-free income and potential growth to savers who put their money in cash, insurance or stocks and shares.

The reason the document has pleased Mr Branson is simple. Virgin Direct will sell ISAs that invest in "tracker" funds – funds which copy the movements of an index such as the FTSE 100 index of leading shares. Most other funds are "active managers": they pick shares by researching which companies have the best prospects. To Mr Branson's pleasure, share investments will get the benchmark only if they are tracker funds.

The plan is designed to make it easier for savers to navigate their way through the maze of over 14,000 savings vehicles in the UK. Helen Liddell, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, said the benchmark "will be easy for people to understand and so help them avoid making poor choices".

The plan appears simple. Investors can save up to £5,000 a year tax-free, with a maximum of £3,000 in cash, £1,000 in insurance-based savings, or £5,000 in unit trusts. But the benchmark will go only to cash deposits, unit-linked insurance or tracker funds – because these are simplest and cheapest.

But are the simplest products the best? Not according to the savings industry. Tracker funds are simple and cheap, they are also quite risky. If consumers believe they carry government approval, the industry warns, they could feel seriously misled when the market dives.

At the heart of the problem is the cost issue. Mr Branson argues savers have lost billions by paying for six-figure fund managers to underperform the index. Paying for a unit trust that tracks an index may cost as little as 0.3 per cent of the investment. Paying an active fund manager usually costs at least 1 per cent.

But in spotlighting low costs, has the Government overlooked the question of risk? AUTIF, the unit trust trade body, complains savers who want a stake in the stock market will be pushed into one of the most volatile types of investment. Unlike active managers, managers of tracker funds must follow the stock market's every move, even when that's downwards. If the market plunges, savers could be stuck in a vehicle that lost the maximum, not the minimum, amount of money.

The Treasury says in its consultation document (in a tone that some perceive as patronising): "ISAs which meet the benchmark standards must be clear and simple, so that they are easy for ordinary people to understand."

But what if us fumbling, ordinary people get it wrong? What if ordinary people are so simple that they mistake the "benchmark" for a guarantee?

Philip Warland, director general of AUTIF, says: "I do not believe the Government can benchmark a unit trust without

giving the impression it is endorsing the product and that the product has wide-ranging suitability for almost all people. The consequences we fear are that people will buy benchmarked products, taking the Government's word, but will have insufficient warning about the one remaining risk in the product, which is the performance."

"If we were to have a substantial market correction or, even worse, the sort of crash that occurred in the 1970s, when the stock market lost nearly two-thirds of its value, we can be absolutely certain that investment funds would look for somebody to blame. We suspect the Government will be nowhere to be seen and the regulator will be seeing whom it can fine."

The Treasury says the aim of benchmarking is to avoid any nasty surprises for the customer. The products can be as simple there is no need for advice: no hidden costs, no strings attached, no notice period and nothing damaging in the small print. As most in the savings industry admit, these are good principles, but removing the cost of advice has its own price.

Steve Muir, spokesman for Axa Sun Life, the insurance giant, said: "There's a lot of mention of how we won't suffer any nasty surprises. But people who are in a tracker fund when the market falls could

have a very nasty surprise. What most people tend to be afraid of isn't a nasty surprise in the small print, but a nasty surprise on the markets."

Those who want a share investment but fear a stock market crash have flocked increasingly over the last three years to savings vehicles that limit this risk. A whole swathe of products – including with-profits savings, protected funds that guarantee return of capital – fit the bill. But none of these will carry the government endorsement.

Further, investment trusts – which differ from unit trusts in that they are set up as quoted companies – have been left out of the equation. Big investment trust providers, such as Flemming and Foreign & Colonial, point out that many investment trusts have lower charges than unit trusts – running directly against the Treasury's reasoning. They even provide cheap access to tracker funds.

Don Clark, managing director of Pep Direct, a leading savings adviser, complains that the government seal of approval will be absent from many of the best products available to a low-risk investor. "Explaining to individuals that the ISA they are being advised to invest in does not come with the government stamp of approval – despite being the best one for their needs – will be a ridiculous state of affairs."

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Slicing the cake

The number of divorces has risen to 170,000 a year. Half the couples who marry this year will be divorced before they celebrate their silver wedding, according to the Office of Census and Surveys. At the same time the finances of married couples are becoming increasingly complex, says Gwenda Joyce-Brophy. New laws are making divorce fairer, but sometimes you need a specialist financial adviser to cut the cake correctly. Page 7

Engine trouble

The appeal of a battery-driven car will suddenly pall when it runs out of juice on the motorway. James Ruppert sings the praises of a hybrid car, the Toyota Prius, which uses a conventional engine to stretch its performance. Page 8

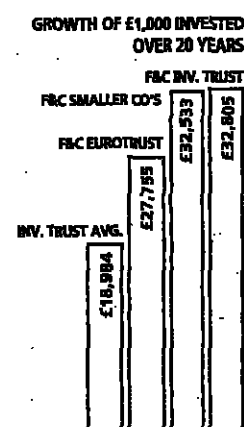
Homing in

Redundant commercial and industrial buildings can make marvellous alternative homes, says Robert Liebman. He takes a tour round the houses being created in a number of redevelopments. Page 9

Exclusion zone

Self-employed people and contract workers who often find themselves excluded from special deals are targeted by Exclusive Connections, based in Oundle, Northants. They are offering a new self-certified mortgage at 5.99 per cent for a year, rising to 9.19 per cent from July 1999, or a two-year fixed rate of 7.69 per cent. Mortgage indemnity guarantees are required for loans over 70 per cent of value, there is a completion fee of £299 and a heavy redemption penalty for repaying within five years.

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Customers should not be in the dark

CLIFFORD GERMAN

It has been a good week for savers, with Northern Rock bowing to the storm of protest it created last month by merging a number of savings accounts, cutting the rate of interest on most of them and penalising savers who wanted to switch as soon as possible to something more profitable.

Northern Rock has now agreed to give savers with notice accounts as much notice of a cut in rates as it requires them to give before they can withdraw money without loss of interest. Of course when rates are rising savers with notice accounts will still expect to get their rates increased at once, or they will give immediate notice of their intention to move their money.

Thanks to its quick response Northern Rock is no longer the immediate target of the OFT enquiry set up last week but the OFT is committed to ensuring that customers are fairly treated and there is certainly more that needs to be done. Many savers are still unaware when their accounts have become uncompetitive or when new and more attractive accounts become available, or when long-term interest rates are falling and instant access rates are as good as notice accounts.

Northern Rock has already pointed out that it would be an extremely expensive proposition to write to every one of their in-

vestors every time a new rate or a new account was introduced, giving them all the information and the opportunity to reshuffle their investments. But Bank of Scotland's Banking Direct arm had the right idea this week, linking the interest on its instant access savings account for amounts over £5,000 to 0.25 per cent below the current Bank of Scotland base rate. That at least is a more reliable indicator than on the vast majority of savings accounts, but why only for investors over £5,000 I wonder?

There is also no doubt that for the past three years in a desperate attempt to pinch mortgage business banks and building societies alike have been giving special mortgage deals and discounts to new customers (including special offers to tempt home-owners to remortgage without moving house) which were not available to their own existing customers.

Some mutuals, such as Nationwide and Britannia building societies, have since introduced loyalty bonuses for existing customers and discounts for those who keep the same lender when they move house, but the best remortgage deals are still available only for borrowers who switch lenders. Lenders justify unfairness in the name of competition. I wonder if the OFT will tackle that issue.

FINANCIAL MAKEOVER

When older age looks like a rosy future

Name: Michael Greer
Age: 58
Occupations: Retired computer engineer

The problem: Mr Greer was made redundant two years ago. He does charity work that occupies about three days a week and in the summer he enjoys watching Lancashire play cricket at Old Trafford. His mortgage is paid off, his pension is adequate for day-to-day expenses, and he has built up a portfolio of investments. They include an investment bond with Irish Life, another with Equitable Life. He has a roll-over Tessa with the Halifax, a National Savings First bond, five different shares in self-select PEP accounts, some Bank of Ireland shares and odds and ends in Premium Bonds and the Bradford & Bingley. It adds up to a substantial and diversified portfolio. But has he got the balance right for the future?

He has four main objectives:
1. To be able to supplement his pension income in future years
2. To be able to pay for long-term care should the need arise
3. To avoid the need to fill in an annual income tax return
4. To take care of inheritance tax demands

The adviser: Garry Haywood is a partner at Allied Associates, based in Twickenham, Middlesex (0181-891 0711). The firm is part of the DBS network and regulated by the Personal Investment Authority

The advice: Michael Greer is the epitome of Mr Micawber's happy man, the one whose income is £1 and his expenditure is 19s 6d. Thanks to a combination of shrewd investment, some redundancy money and inherited shares, Mr Greer has amassed

sufficient assets to see him through his allotted span. When an Irish Life policy matured in 1993 he was happy with the returns and reinvested in an Irish Life Bond.

When his mother died in 1985 Mr Greer inherited from her a modest holding in the Bank of Ireland. Over the years his investment has grown and he has reinvested the dividends in further shares. Over the past three tax years he has switched some of the shares into self-select PEPs by selling shares to reinvest immediately in a PEP.

This technique is known as "bed and pepping" and remains effective for this year at least (unlike the "bed and breakfast", or selling enough shares to establish a tax-free profit and buying them back immediately to establish a new and higher base for future gains). Bed and breakfast was made ineffective in the last Budget, but "bed and ISA" will probably remain an effective way of converting taxable into tax-free investments in future.

In fact Mr Greer could have reduced his liability to both income tax on dividends and capital gains tax on realised gains much more by bed and pepping much earlier, but his PEPs will give him tax-free income and exempt him from gains if he needs to sell in future.

One area of concern I have is that this single holding in Bank of Ireland represents getting on for half of Mr Greer's capital assets, a large amount of his eggs in one basket.

His pension is index-linked at 3 per cent a year which should help his income keep



Michael Greer is sitting comfortably: shrewd investments and inherited shares have given him a diversified and tax-efficient portfolio
Photograph: Martin Rickett/NTV

£3,000. This could be eliminated by putting his investment bonds in trust for his beneficiaries. This can easily be done by writing to the bond providers, Irish Life and Equitable Life, and asking for a trust form.

Mr Greer has also taken the wise precaution of making a will and thus ensuring that his money goes exactly where he wants it to. This is particularly important should you wish charities or non-family members to benefit.

He has the happy prospect of looking forward to his old age pension being paid when he reaches his 65th birthday. At this point he will need to keep close watch that he does not fall into the age-allowance trap, which reduces the additional tax-free allowance he is entitled to after 65 by £1 for every £2 he earns above the threshold, currently £16,200. He could do this by continuing to switch assets into tax-exempt bonds and ISAs.

But all in all it makes a pleasant change to review a situation where there is little requirement for change. It might still be useful for Mr Greer to work with an independent financial adviser in order to take advantage of all the changes in legislation and investment opportunities over the years.

pace with inflation. He has earmarked the proceeds of his roll-over Tessa which matures in three years' time to pay for any capital items such as a new car.

His income is adequate to fund the cost of long-term care, so there is no need to worry about whether to invest in a policy to help supplement his in-

come should the need arise. While a policy is often the only practical way for individuals whose income will not stretch to the £20,000 a year that a residential home can cost over a long period of time, it is a sad fact that the average time of funding long-term care is only three years.

He has also structured his investments in such a way that he has no liability for the higher rate of income tax, and there is therefore no need for him to fill in an annual tax return. His final objective is to minimise his inheritance tax liability. Currently there is a very small potential liability of approximately

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will do better than in a fund that simply tracks the index; they will get their money back.

If the FT-SE jumps up and down for six years, investors avoid taking a chance on its value on maturity in 2004. ScotAm will measure the FT-SE's performance each day by taking its average level over the past 12 months. Investors are guaranteed the difference between the highest level of the FT-SE, on this measure, and its level in the first year. But that only applies if they do not surrender before 2004.

Drawbacks and risks: If the FT-SE does very well over the next year, investors will start

from a higher base: they are not guaranteed such a great return. If the FT-SE rises in its last year, they will get less than in a simple FT-SE tracker.

There is a charge of 5 per cent of the initial investment – hefty for this sort of product but not totally unreasonable. But investors must be sure that they will stick with the bond until December 2004. Surrender before that date, and the guarantees will evaporate.

Verdict: A good investment for worriers who also want some of the FT-SE action.

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As radical chic as it gets

Collect to Invest: Italian design from the flower-power era turned convention upside-down. Now it's shaking London salerooms. John Windsor reports

Italian design is hot stuff. In 1968, while students and workers took to the streets in Paris, Berkeley and at the LSE in the cause of politics, Italians were rioting about design. They forced the 14th Milan Triennale exhibition to close after protesting that its designs were too mainstream.

Remember that next time you have the chance to sit in a Dorifora armchair designed by the maverick Italian Alchimia group. It mocks both over-elaborate traditional design and the constraints of modernism. Both a joke and a statement. A political statement, if you like. You can almost hear it talk.

In the late Seventies, Alchimia held gallery exhibitions that promoted design as art. They were a form of social/political subversion that has had no equal in this country. The nearest we have had to it is pop art - and punk.

Furniture, lamps, kitchen appliances and glass by turbulent Italian designers have become historical objects. Not just art history, but social and political history. This is why museums across the world are competing for examples, pushing up prices.

There has been a sudden deluge of Italian design in the London salerooms. Sotheby's and Bonhams held sales this month - with instructive results - and a sale containing the choicest, most iconic pieces is at Christie's South Kensington on 3 June (2pm). It is South Ken's first sale dedicated to Italian design.

Museums have been spending heavily because they fear that the Pesce Gaetano giant anglepoise lamp (1970-71) or the Cini Boeri "Serpentine" chair (1971) might be the last one they will get a chance to bid for.

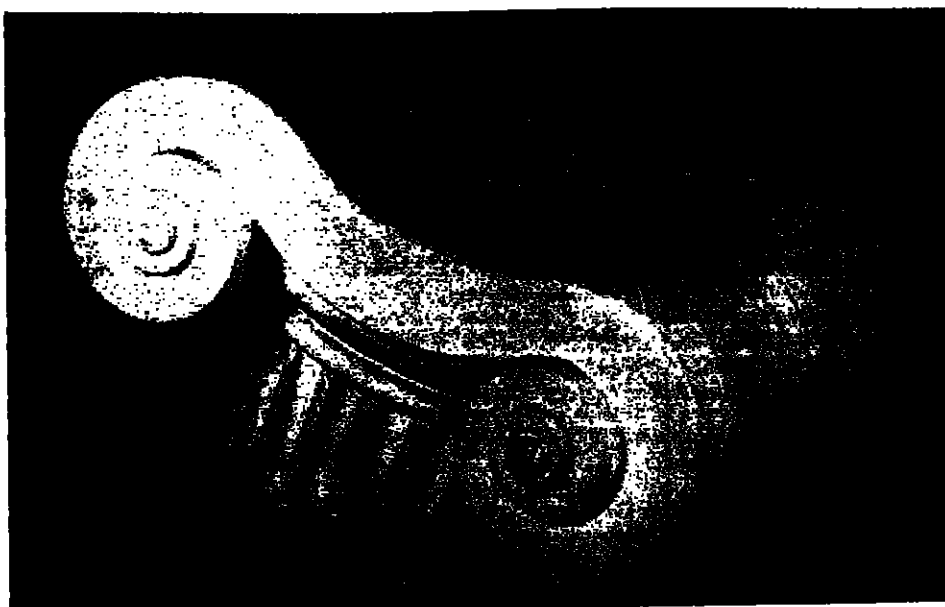
This puts private buyers in a dilemma. Museums and rich collectors need only one example of each classic chair or lamp. Once they have bought one, they will not bid again. Demand then loses its edge. But who can tell

when that is about to happen? A track record of auction values will have been established, and estimates will remain at deceptively optimistic levels.

You have to gamble. By refusing to engage in a saleroom duel, you might miss the last Gruppo Dam book-shaped "Libro" chair (1970). On the other hand, you might find that, soon afterwards, one more is tempted into auction by the high prices, just as competitive bidding is falling off. There is one in the forthcoming South Ken sale estimated £2,000-£2,500. An incomplete one in Sotheby's sale last week was unsold at an estimated £1,000-£1,500.

Now is a good time to try your luck at auction because the May design sales have been hard on the pockets of museums and collectors alike. There have been record prices this month at Los Angeles Modern Auctions, the Treadway Gallery in New York, Sotheby's Chicago and Christie's Los Angeles.

This, coupled with the got-one-already syndrome, might explain the mixed reception



A tilt at classical design that might leave you with back strain: above, Studio 65's 'Capitello' (1971) and, below, the Gruppo G14 upholstered tubular steel 'Fiocco' (1970)

given at London auctions recently to examples of a genuine rarity: the upholstered tubular steel Gruppo G14 "Fiocco" lounge chair (1970). Or is it because no one can sit for more than two minutes on the arty, sculptural thing without back strain?

One at Bonhams on Wednesday, estimated £1,200-£1,400 and missing a part, failed to find a buyer. Of two at Sotheby's last week, both estimated £1,500-£1,800, one fetched £1,725, the

other was unsold. But last March Christie's South Ken got £2,070 for one. Demand seems to be wavering, but the chair is still a classic. Will anybody bid the estimated £1,500-£2,000 for South Ken's example? How many more are likely to come to auction? How many were made, anyway? That's the thing with Italian design. No one really knows. An educated guess says there were around 200 Fioccos.

Other classics on offer at South Ken: the scrumptious Gruppo Strum design group's "Pratone" (meadow) chair - if you can call it a chair. It is a piece of pop art, a mat with giant polyurethane spikes resembling blades of grass. Its anti-design message is: bring the outside in - let radical design groups infiltrate society. One was unsold at £3,500 at Sotheby's last year. South Ken's is a 1986 re-edition estimated £2,500-£3,500.

As for the classic, and classical, "Capitello", by Studio 65 (1971), that tilts at Roman architecture and is tilted in a way that makes it unsuitable on: one was unsold, estimated £2,200-£2,800, at Bonhams two years ago. British collectors were not as chued up then as now. A year later, one sold for £2,530 at South Ken. Another on 3 June is estimated £2,000-£2,500.

Go for classic chairs and light-

ing - show-off objects for the sitting-room not the kitchen. Bonhams' undistinguished Italian tubular steel folding chairs and lamps were unwanted. In the same sale Ettore Sottsass's Vedic-inspired "Yantra" vases were popular at around £500. But two-dimensional works stuck - even acrylics and gouaches by Alessandro Guerriero.

Star turn at Christie's South Ken on 3 June will be the first appearance at auction in London of the Archizoom group's pop art "Safari" six-seater sofa, designed with upholstered imitation leopard skin in 1968. Did Archizoom really mean to impose social intercourse on six people by seating them in a circle? Or is it a comment on social regimentation? To try it out at home will cost you £8,000-£12,000. But watch out - some well-brought-up museum curator with tidy habits might have taken a fancy to it.

Christie's South Kensington, 85 Old Brompton Road, London SW7 (0171-581 7611).

INTERNET INVESTOR



ROBIN AMLÖT

An attractive site that offers a cuddly corporate guide to lead the way - Policy Plusus

It has been quite a week for news that will affect the way the Internet and the World Wide Web is likely to develop. The US Justice Department and 20 states' Attorneys General threw the collective book at software giant Microsoft over its Web browser. This case will drag on for some time before it is resolved. It has, after all, taken the Justice Department eight years to get to this point. It first began investigating Microsoft in 1990.

Of more immediate significance to anybody who already surfs the Web is the decision reached at the World Trade Organisation in Geneva this week. A deal was put forward that would bar governments for the next year from trying to collect tariffs on computer programmes and any other electronic goods delivered across national frontiers via the Internet.

The proposal does not cover Internet shopping involving products ordered from a Website and delivered by ordinary mail. What this means is that you can buy and download software from a Website in the US, for example, without creating a potential Value Added Tax liability for yourself. However, if you order the software on disc or CD together with a manual and it is delivered by the postman, you will have to pay VAT.

You can keep up to date with developments on the

case against Microsoft and on the trade issue by checking out the Justice Department and WTO Websites.

Among recent newcomers to the Web, Bath-based traded endowment policy (TEP) firm PolicyPlus has established an attractive site. No doubt on the grounds that we need our hands firmly holding in cyberspace, the site offers a cuddly corporate guide to lead the way. He appears to be a refugee from the Asterix range of books, a Roman soldier by the name of PolicyPlusus. It leaves me wondering who gets paid to think up things like this but I suppose with the "plus" of PolicyPlus being a latin word the choice of mascot was obvious, if not obvious. My own reaction is that he appears to be Ridiculus.

Nevertheless, the site does achieve its aim of clarifying the process of buying and selling traded endowment policies. For all that he is a gimmick, PolicyPlusus does serve a useful purpose as a link to the site's Jargon Buster. If there is any word or phrase which you do not understand you may either click on him or on the word itself to go to the Jargon Buster for an explanation.

If you are thinking of selling your endowment policy, PolicyPlus will value it for you providing that it has run for at least 25 per cent of its term or a minimum of seven years and has a surrender value of at

least £2,000. There is an online Quotation Request Form that you can fill in to receive a free, no obligation valuation within 48 hours or less, which is guaranteed for a period of 15 days (even if bonus rates fall during that time).

There is a brief explanation on the Website telling you how the company arrives at its valuations. PolicyPlus takes the current value of a policy, applies the current bonus rates, both reversionary and terminal, through to maturity. This Formula Maturity Value is then discounted back to the current date to arrive at a purchase price.

The site also caters for potential policy purchasers. PolicyPlus provides explanations of the taxation and legal issues involved in TEPs and includes information from life companies. There is a list on the site of the TEPs currently available on the company's books and you may also register to receive sales lists of available policies updated on a weekly basis.

PolicyPlus claims to be unusual among TEP market-makers in having appointed an independent firm of solicitors to handle the legal aspects of its TEP sales and purchases. No charge is made on customers for the involvement of the firm, Thrings & Long. It is the largest firm of solicitors in Bath and has been in business for more than 200 years.

There is also a telephone helpline for those who remained mystified by the workings of the Web or who prefer not to commit their policy details or requirements to cyberspace.

PolicyPlus: www.policyplus.com

US Justice Dept: www.usdoj.gov

World Trade Organisation: www.wto.org

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BRIAN TORÁ

Turning point in Far East?

Sark is such a wonderful island. The tranquil atmosphere delivers such a restful frame of mind that you become totally detached from the world. It was not surprising when, after a mere five days, I had forgotten that there had ever been an Asian crisis. Until President Suharto resigned, of course. But does this change at the top really make any difference?

Incoming President Habibie has a reputation for being an economic wild card. In the past he has been responsible for a rather erratic interest-rate policy and for seeking to turn the commodity-based economy of the third most populous nation on earth into something rather more high-tech - not so far successfully achieved. He was also vice-president under Suharto.

It will take a while to gain the measure of the new man, but much will depend on how much he is prepared to co-operate with the IMF. They should really be in the driving seat now, but he may have his own ideas about how Indonesians should manage their way out of their problems. And, of course, we do not know if the civil unrest will now moderate.

It all prompted me to reconsider these markets on the other side of the world. We are approaching the first anniversary of the start of the Asian crisis, with every indication that the storm will run and run. Domestic demand in the region remains flat, but this is helping the balance of payments position of these countries. At some stage the major international banks - who arguably were responsible for the collapse when they collectively withdrew their support - will feel more confident and return to the region. Certainly, talking to Alan Butler-Henderson, who used to be

ING Baring's man in the Far East, before becoming an independent commentator on the region, thinks that markets like Thailand and Malaysia have fallen to levels that discount all current problems. I hope he is right.

There is some sign that big business is beginning to dip a toe in the water, even if international money managers are still steering well clear. South-east Asia is a long way from being written off.

Of course, Japan remains a focal point. In Mr Butler-Henderson's view, bonds in Tokyo are over-bought and equities over-sold. Interestingly, he thinks that any correction might have implications for other equity markets. When the Japanese regain their confidence, they are likely to bring money back onshore.

What has been interesting about this whole sorry affair is how little impact it has had on the developed stock markets. In practice, the value of share markets in South-east Asia are of relatively little significance, if you exclude Japan. It may still take some time for the situation to fully unwind, but the long-term advantages - large populations, aspiring consumers, a strong work ethic - remain intact.

So far as Indonesia is concerned, they were a lot further behind many parts of the region and the considerable disruption that the events of the past few weeks will have delivered to the economy will not make recovery any easier. It will be a long time before we see them back on an upward path, but maybe the worst is behind them. It looks time to give the region more than just a cursory glance. But widows and orphans should still stay clear.

Brian Torá is chairman of the Greig Middleton Investment Strategy Committee.

BEST BORROWING RATES

MORTGAGES	Telephone	Rate	Term	Notes
FIXED RATES				
Scotthamphill BS	0950 133149	0.85% for 1 year	95%	FreeMFP for rate up to 80%
First National	0800 060088	5.40% to 5.5.01	75%	
Abbey National	0800 555100	5.00% to 5.5.03	90%	No MFP for rate up to 90%
VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES				
Scotthamphill BS	0950 133149	1.50% for 1 year	95%	FreeMFP for rate up to 80%
First National	0800 060088	4.44% to 5.5.01	75%	
Habibie	0800 101110	5.95% to 5.11.03	90%	No high landing fee
FIRST TIME BUYERS FIXED RATES				
Northern Rock	0845 805 0500	2.85% to 1.9.00	95%	No MFP for rate up to 80%
First National	0800 101110	5.75% to 5.11.01	95%	No high landing fee (MFP)
Habibie BS	0800 302010	5.85% for 5 years	95%	No high landing fee
FIRST TIME BUYERS VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES				
Scotthamphill BS	0800 216121	2.25% to 1.9.99	95%	
First National	0800 060088	5.50% to 5.11.01	95%	
Habibie BS	0800 302010	6.85% for 5 years	95%	Reduced of rate fee
UNSECURED PERSONAL LOANS				
	Telephone	APR %	Fixed monthly payments on £5K over 3 yrs	
UNSECURED			With insurance	Without insurance
Northern Rock	0345 421421	8.9% H	£183.13	£186.11
Yorkshire Bank	0800 202122	12.0%	£180.33	£185.77
Direct Line	0181 680 9966	12.8% A	£183.75	£188.38
SECURED LOANS (SECOND CHARGE)				
	Telephone	APR	Max LTV Advance	Term
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	6.7%	£5K to £15K	6 months to 85 years
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 121110	10.7%	£2.5K to £100K	3 years to 10 years
First Direct	0345 100103	11.2%	£5K to £15K	Up to 40 years
OVERDRAFTS				
	Telephone	Account	APR	Unauthorised
Alliance & Leicester	0500 959595	Alliance	0.95%	12.00% 2.50% 28.0%
Bank of Scotland Direct	0800 804884	Direct charge	11.0%	28.5%
Habibie BS	0800 302010	Finance	0.95%	12.2% 2.10% 28.2%
CREDIT CARDS				
	Telephone	Card Type	Rate	APR
Capital One Bank	0800 699000	Visa	0.5659% 6.50% H	54 days
RBS Advance	0800 077770	Visa	0.5494% 7.50% H	56 days
Co-operative Bank	0800 109000	Advantage Visa	0.5594% 6.50% H	54 days
GOLD CARDS				
	Telephone	Card Type	Rate	APR
Capital One Bank	0800 699000	Visa	0.5659% 6.50% H	54 days
Co-operative Bank	0345 212212	Bank Rate Visa	0.50% 11.00% C120	46 days
RBS Advance	0800 077770	Visa	0.5494% 7.50% H	56 days
STORE CARDS				
	Telephone	Payment by direct debit	Payment by other methods	
John Lewis	Visa store	1.35%	18.0%	1.35%
Debenhams	Visa store	1.85%	26.0%	2.15%
Mark & Spencer	01244 681681	1.97%	25.3%	2.07%

FIXED RATE BONDS
Northern Rock 0800 216121 5 Year £100 8.00% Yearly
Yorkshire Bank 0800 202122 5 Year £100 8.00% Yearly
Direct Line 0181 680 9966 5 Year £100 8.00% Yearly

FOLLOW-ON TESSAS
Northern Rock 0800 216121 5 Year £100 8.00% Yearly
Yorkshire Bank 0800 202122 5 Year £100 8.00% Yearly
Direct Line 0181 680 9966 5 Year £100 8.00% Yearly

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS (net)
Northern Rock 0800 216121 1 Year £10,000 6.25% FRI Yearly
Yorkshire Bank 0800 202122 2 Year £10,000 6.75% FRI Yearly
Direct Line 0181 680 9966 3 Year £10,000 7.25% FRI Yearly

OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS (gross)
Capital One Bank 0800 699000 1 Year £10,000 7.00% Yearly
Yorkshire Bank 0800 202122 2 Year £10,000 7.50% Yearly
Direct Line 0181 680 9966 3 Year £10,000 8.00% Yearly

NATIONAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (gross)
Capital One Bank 0800 699000 1 Month £20 4.75% Yearly
Yorkshire Bank 0800 202122 3 Month £20 5.25% Yearly
Direct Line 0181 680 9966 6 Month £20 5.75% Yearly

INCOME BONDS
Capital One Bank 0800 699000 5 Year £100 6.00% FRI Yearly
Yorkshire Bank 0800 202122 12 Month £1,000 6.50% FRI Yearly
Direct Line 0181 680 9966 1 Year £100 6.75% FRI Yearly

4th Issue (see text)
10th Issue (see text)
15th Issue (see text)

BEST SAVINGS RATES

Instant Access	Telephone	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate	Interest
Clydesdale Bank	0800 442265	Savings	Instant	£1	6.75%	Day
Yorkshire Bank	0800 222200	Card Server	Instant	£50	6.50%	Year
Strand & Swinton BS	0345 413853	British Institute	Instant	£5,000	6.00%	Year
Leeds & Hallam BS	0500 226777	Premium Access	Instant	£5,000	7.00%	Year

Instant Access Postal Accounts	Telephone	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate	Interest
Standard Life Bank	0345 555557	Direct Access	Instant (1)	£1	6.95%	Year
Scottish Widows Bank	0845 845 0223	Instant Access	Instant (2)	£100	7.00%	Year
Savemy	0800 959595	Direct Savings	Instant (3)	£100	7.50%	Year
First National BS	0800 555544	Direct Access	Instant (4)	£5,000	7.55%	Year

Notice Accounts & Bonds	Telephone	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate	Interest
Scotthamphill BS	01723 500616	Scotthamphill 30	30 Day (1)	£1,000	7.00%	Year
Strand & Swinton BS	0800 202121	Postal 30	30 Day (2)	£10,000	7.00%	Year
Legal & General Bank	0500 111200	40 Direct 4	40 Day (3)	£1,000	7.00%	Year
First National BS	0800 555544	40 Day Mifca	40 Day (4)	£500	7.20%	Year

Cheque Accounts	Telephone	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate	Interest
Investment Bank (UK)	0171 203 1850	HCA 5000	Instant	£5,000	6.45%	Month
Yorkshire Bank	0113 235 0223	Agent Reserve	Instant	£10,000	5.50%	City
Cheltenham BS	0800 428429	Classic Postal	Instant	£10,000	7.00%	Year
Lloyds Joseph	0171 599 2323	Classic Postal	Instant	£10,000	6.70%	Year

Fixed Rate Bonds	Telephone	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate	Interest
Northern Rock	01723 572222	Fixed Rate Bond	5 Year	£5,000	7.55% F	Yearly
Yorkshire Bank	0800 202122	Fixed Rate Bond	5 Year	£10,000	8.00% F	Yearly
First National	0800 555544	Fixed Rate Bond	5 Year	£5,000	7.50% F	Yearly

Follow-on TESSAS	Telephone	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate	Interest
Northern Rock	01723 572222	Follow-on TESSA	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
Yorkshire Bank	0800 202122	Follow-on TESSA	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year
First National	0800 555544	Follow-on TESSA	5 Year	£100	8.00%	Year

Guaranteed Income Bonds (net)	Telephone	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate	Interest
Northern Rock	0181 207 8007	Guaranteed Income Bond	1 Year	£10,000	6.25% FRI Year	
Yorkshire Bank	0113 235 0223	Guaranteed Income Bond	2 Year	£10,000	6.75% FRI Year	
First National	0800 555544	Guaranteed Income Bond	3 Year	£10,000	7.25% FRI Year	
Capital One Bank	0800 699000	Guaranteed Income Bond	4 Year	£10,000	7.75% FRI Year	

Offshore Accounts (gross)	Telephone	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate	Interest
Capital One Bank	01654 681108	Capital One Direct	Instant	£10,000	7.00%	Year
Yorkshire Bank	01179 907072	Yorkshire Direct	Instant	£20,000	7.50%	Year
First National	01461 710000	First National Direct	60 Day Notice	£10,000	7.00%	Year
Strand & Swinton BS	01461 700000	Strand & Swinton Direct	60 Day Notice	£10,000	8.00%	Year

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Source: MONEYFACTS 01682 500677 21 May 1998

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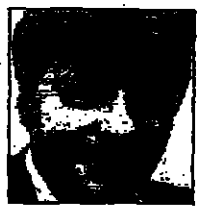
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5/PERSONAL FINANCE

Treasury steps into ISA minefield



THE
JONATHAN
DAVIS
COLUMN

With the market as it is just now, it makes sense for new investors to put long-term money into an index-tracking fund, not an actively managed one

Helen Liddell, the Treasury minister responsible for financial services, has a reputation for being a tough cookie. I hope she is, for she will certainly need a thick hide if she is to see off the howl of industry protests that have greeted the Government's latest proposals for ISAs (individual savings accounts).

The Treasury this week produced its second consultation document on the subject, including details for the first time of the voluntary benchmarks which it hopes consumers will use for guidance when deciding which ISA to pick. The Government's idea is to set minimum standards for

cost and simplicity against which each ISA can be judged. If an ISA does not meet those standards – for example because it costs more than the benchmark annual management fee – it can still be offered for sale and qualify for tax-free status. But what it won't qualify for is the government stamp of approval, which the so-called CAT standard will inevitably be seen as. Now it doesn't take a genius to work out that any ISAs which don't qualify for this kind of approval are going to be a lot harder to sell than those which are.

Philip Warland, the director general of Autif, the unit trust industry's trade body, was so incensed by what the Government is proposing that he felt moved to describe this week's proposals as "economically illiterate, politically inept and lethal for some consumers".

Meanwhile, over at the regulators' corner, both Howard Davies, the head of the Financial Services Authority, and Peter Dean, the Investment Ombudsman, expressed doubts about the wisdom of trying to set standards for any kind of equity-based investment product. Their concern seems to be that, by implicitly endorsing products which by their nature are not risk-free, the Government is in danger of raising public expectations and finding itself blamed for inducing people to put their money into something that turns out to have been ill-advised, or even to have cost them money.

They have a point, though quite why anyone should ever regard a Government endorsement for a financial product as implying any sort of guarantee of performance has always baffled me. (You only have to think back to War Loan or indeed gilts for most of the post-war period to realise that the last person you should ever buy a financial product from is a democratically elected government, which is prone to expensive inflationary habits).

Most of what the Government had to say in its consultation document this week was, however, admirable common sense. What it is trying to promote is what every consumer also should want – which is low cost, trustworthy, financial savings products where they have some assurance they will not be ripped off. The biggest talking point was its proposal to make the benchmark standards for equity-based funds so restrictive. Its proposal is to allow only index-tracking funds and funds which offer single pricing (as opposed to the traditional unit trust bid-offer spread) to qualify. No actively managed funds, therefore, and – equally surprisingly – no investment trusts at all (even index-tracking funds). The Government has yet to spell out the kind of management fee it has in mind for ISAs, but it seems to be thinking in terms of a 1 per cent annual fee.

Well, high-minded it may be, but it is hard to think of a more calculated affront to the marketing departments of the fund management industry. Unit trusts in particular are used to charging much higher fees on average for their actively managed funds (and profiting hugely from them), and have been looking forward to pitching into the new ISA market with gusto. No wonder that Mr Warland was so affronted. Heavens, before long the Government will be saying that the average actively managed unit trust does not offer good value for money. And where would be then?

Well, regular readers of this column will not be surprised to hear me say that I think the Government is on the right track, at least as far as this element of its plans is concerned. For someone who has made the decision to invest in the equity market for the medium to long-term period, then an index-tracking fund is the first place that he or she should think about putting their money.

LOOSE CHANGE

The cost of borrowing is still falling. The Prudential yesterday cut its personal loan rates to 11.7 per cent APR on amounts over £10,000, and 12.7 per cent on amounts from £5,000 to £10,000. Loan offers go as low as £1,000 where the interest rate is 17.9 per cent. The Pru claimed its rates undercut the traditional lenders such as Barclays and NatWest by between 1 and 3 per cent. Loans can be repaid over one to five years, and there are no penalties for paying loans off early.

Fixed-rate mortgages are still coming down in cost. In the past few days Abbey National has replaced its existing range of fixed-rate mortgages with new offers charging up to 0.2 points less than the existing series. New rates include 4.95 per cent fixed for two years, 5.7 per cent for three years up to 90 per cent of the property value and with no penalties for redemption after the fixed-rate term.

Tesco Personal Finance has launched its first personal loans, available over the phone and in 120 stores throughout the UK. Rates start at 10.9 per cent on amounts between £7,500 and £10,000, rising to 13.3 per cent on sums between £3,000 and £7,500, 13.7 per cent between £2,000 and £3,000 and 14.7 per cent APR on sums of £1,000 to £2,000. Loans can be arranged for any purpose including consolidating existing loans and credit-card borrowing, optional payment protection cover is available to maintain payments in the event of illness.

Nationwide has cut rates by up to 0.3 per cent on its new two, three, five- and 10-year fixed-rate mortgages, which now cost 5.19 per cent, 5.69 per cent, 5.89 per cent and 6.49 per cent respectively for customers moving home (remortgagors pay a touch over 7 per cent). Nationwide, like most of its rivals, now charges redemption penalties for loans paid off early, eg within five years on a two-year fix, within six years on a three-year fix and within seven years on a five-year fix. A £295 fee and Nationwide's insurance are also needed to get the lowest rates.

MONEY & ETHICS

You can keep your ethical stance in your portfolio

The range of ethical funds keeps growing, and performance figures show that what is good for your conscience need not be bad for your bank balance, says
Iain Morse

In April of this year, 20 ethical unit trusts owned assets worth just over £1.324m. Returns from the 17 funds available five years ago show an average performance of 86.2 per cent, against an average for all UK unit trusts and open-ended investment companies (OEICs) of 76.7 per cent over the same period.

According to Fleur Leach, ethical fund manager at Albert E. Sharpe: "The option of buying an ethical share portfolio is neglected by many private investors, who perhaps don't realise it is available."



Arms dealing? No thanks. If this is your view, there are several options for investment

Unit trusts are "pooled investments" where a fund is set up under a legal trust, which specifies the range of shares and other types of financial instrument that can be bought or sold by the fund managers. These are "open-ended" funds: new money buys new units, and if you want to realise your holding you must redeem its value from the fund trustees.

The cost of such investments, including any commission payable to a broker, comes out of the bid/offer spread, or difference between the price at which you buy a unit and redeem its value back again. Most ethical unit trusts have spreads of between 5 and 6 per cent; Scottish Equitable comes top with 6.51 per cent, while newcomer Standard Life has cut its spread to just 3.39 per cent.

Annual management charges for ethical unit trusts are usually between 1 and 1.5 per cent, although Equitable Life has reduced this to just 0.5 per cent and Standard Life is on the low side at 0.95 per cent. City Financial Acorn ethical is top charger at 1.75 per cent.

This means that most ethical funds are run for growth, not income. Both Friends Provident and NPI offer income funds, but the gross yields on these fall below average yields available from non-ethical income funds.

Mr Bromige thinks the best way round this for investors is to "buy funds for growth, use your annual capital gains tax allowance, and plan to realise some of your gains each year by encashing units."

For the ethically minded with larger sums to invest – typically £100,000 or more – a number of fund managers offer discretionary portfolio management services. Credit Suisse is a leader in the field, with an individually tailored portfolio.

If you want to buy and manage your own portfolio of shares EIRIS offer a share screening service, selecting stocks according to negative and positive criteria. But subscribers will have to do their own research on which shares they then buy or sell, unless they go to a stockbroker for further advice. Albert E. Sharpe offers this facility, with annual management charges of 1 per cent of portfolio value, plus dealing costs and commissions.

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هَذَا مِنْ أَصْل

The spoils of war: the cat, the house, and now the pension

It is no longer just the obvious material assets that have to be divided up by divorcing partners, says **Gwenda Joyce-Brophy**. Often the pension has more value than the joint property equity

Divorce may be becoming more commonplace, but the financial issues and conundrums it throws up in its wake are, if anything, becoming increasingly complex. A combination of factors are at work. The average age at divorce for both men and women is now mid to late thirties, precisely a stage in life when many couples have accrued assets of varying value and liquidity – as well as liabilities and responsibilities. Superimposed on this demographic fact are the far-reaching implications of changes to the law relating to the role of pensions as an asset in divorce.

The Pensions Act of 1995 represented a sea-change, and pension funds now have to be considered in a divorce. While "who gets the house" was once the overriding issue, "what happens to the pension?" is now equally pertinent. Indeed, if there is little equity in the matrimonial property, the pension may be the most valuable asset. Currently courts can earmark – set aside – a share of a spouse's pension. Because of vexed issues such as the pension holder dying before retirement age and the question of remarriage, judges often prefer to compensate using other assets to offset loss of pension rights. Pension splitting, a cause which the group Fairshares in particular has relentlessly championed, is where the allocated pension share remains in the scheme, and April 2000 seems to be the likely date for this to take effect.

Meanwhile, those embarking on divorce are already finding that issues such as the valuation of pensions can be a quagmire in which even their solicitors can find themselves floundering. Yet as Fairshares' Dawn Barnett notes: "The decisions you will make during your divorce are absolutely crucial for your future. That is why it is vital to get advice, and to make sure that pensions, for example, are valued properly."

It is no surprise then that many of those involved in divorce, both personally as well as professionally, have been increasingly looking for sources of specialised financial help. "We have seen the volume of demand for this sort of service growing steadily over the past few years, particularly among women, and it is the area of pensions that has seen increasing demand for our specialist advice, from solicitors also," says Mark Ormerod of Hill Martin Financial Management Group. Keith Brown, an independent consultant at NJS Services in Kent, has also noted additional enquiries from solicitors.

Regulations in 1996 laid down that the value of a pension be the "cash equivalent transfer value" (what the holder would be paid if he were to transfer it to another pension fund). This can undershoot its real value, many experts believe, and pension valuation remains a difficult issue. One group, The Divorce Corporation, specialises solely in pension valuation. "It is a very complex area. All pension valuations involve making a number of assumptions, and, depending on those assumptions you can come out with very different results," says the corporation's Keith Popplewell. In one instance, using different assumptions, valuations of £20,000 and £110,000 were obtained for the same pension.

"The CETV approach can underestimate the value of a pension for a variety of reasons, and you have to make sure that death in service and loss of widow's pension are taken into account."

Act when it comes to divorce despite the prolonged political arguments surrounding it. In particular they seem unaware of the implications it may have on their own retirement funds and how much it would cost to replace those funds.

"We also see a lot of confusion about earmarking and splitting and I am not sure that a solicitor alone should be advising on this area. It is times like these that it would be sensible to see advisers and solicitors working together in the client's interests". The Divorce Corporation in fact only works on instruction from solicitors.

You can't expect solicitors to do the impossible – pension valuation is becoming a profession in itself, says Mr Popplewell, a view reinforced by family solicitor Jane Simpson of solicitors Manches and Co who sometimes uses the services of financial groups. "Expert pension advice will become even more important because of the flexibility that the Family Law Act will provide when it is implemented in late 1999 or 2000.

With all the emphasis on pensions it is easy to give other assets scant attention, or to see pensions as an issue in isolation when it is one part of a financial profile that needs to be considered whole. "We work together with the solicitor to ensure the client is made aware of the potential pitfalls regarding the various assets in order to navigate the most suitable course", says Keith Brown. "For example, if there is an endowment mortgage, should it be assigned to one partner only, or surrendered or sold? In addition, when we do review the policies in place there is often a wish from the client to stop all plans including savings plans and life cover originally intended to be of benefit to children.

There is sometimes little discussion as to who will take financial responsibility for these plans, and as a result, neither partner does. This can lead to perfectly good plans being surrendered when with some discussion this could be avoided". Strategic planning is something that Mr Ormerod of Hill Martin believes is one of their key roles. "For example, we will advise on investment strategies that deal with income requirements for the future."

While the solicitor's role is in negotiating a settlement, that settlement needs to be used in the most efficient way. "Some people for whom we act often have little experience of financial management or investment. If we achieve for them a clean break which includes a lump sum payment for investment to provide income, then that has to be managed carefully," says Jane Simpson. Obtaining extra, specialised advice costs money. Rates will vary, with some services offering one-off fixed fees for specific services as in the case of the Divorce Corporation, while others are charged by the hour. Mr Ormerod at Hill Martin believes it is vital that the client receives independent advice on a fee basis. "Clients are vulnerable to being sold products," he says. "What people sometimes forget is that we can and do actually save clients money," argues Keith Brown. "We look to the financial group to do the things a solicitor does not and cannot do, for example give investment advice, or things it can do more cost-effectively, for example preparing a financial budget," says Jane Simpson.

In terms of choosing one: "Ask your solicitor if he or she has direct experience, particularly of the financial adviser's results," advises Jane Simpson. "In addition to results, we also look for where an adviser and his or her team deal with the client sensitively and patiently, as well as for flexibility and dependability".

NJS's Keith Brown says: "I think people are still unaware of the implications of the Pensions

Act when it comes to divorce despite the prolonged political arguments surrounding it. In particular they seem unaware of the implications it may have on their own retirement funds and how much it would cost to replace those funds.

The Divorce Corporation: 0114 262 0616 (pension valuations for solicitors). **Fairshares:** 01788 570585. **Hill Martin Financial Management Group:** 0171 233 2777 (London Office), 0117 927 1500 (Bristol Office). **NJS Consultants:** 01689 850445. **Manches and Co:** 0171 404 4433.

The Which Guide to Divorce has chapters on Financial Planning for Divorce and Pensions. £10.99 p&p free, call 0800 252100.



Split down the middle: Kathleen Turner and Michael Douglas in 'The War of the Roses' probably didn't pay enough attention to their joint pension

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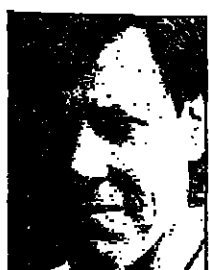
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GAVIN GREEN

In the old days, you bought an estate car for a simple reason: you needed more boot space than a saloon. It was a utilitarian vehicle, as all good cars should be.

Sure, there was a tiny bit of pretension – after all, the very term “estate” conjured up images of the idyllic rustic lifestyle so adored by the English. Old-fashioned estates were sometimes known as “shooting brakes” to suggest scenes of Edwardian shooting parties, with a James Mason-like character as your titled host. None the less, estate cars were born to lug loads which saloons simply could not accommodate.

How different things are now. Pop into your local dealer and you’ll be shown small estates, sports estates, luxury estates, lifestyle estates and – the newest fad – off-roading estates. Even the police choose estate cars as chase cars nowadays and, a few years back, Volvo used one of its estate models to compete in the British Touring Car Championship.

Four very different estates have passed through my hands recently. First up was one of the recently revised Mercedes C class. This is known, in motor industry speak, as a lifestyle estate. It’s more of a giant hatchback than a true estate, and it’s aimed at people with busy, sporty lifestyles who need space for skis and tennis rackets but don’t spend much time at B&Q or in antique shops. Other lifestyle estates include the BMW 3-series touring, the Volvo V40 and the Audi A4 Avant. None has a big carrying area, which is a polite way of saying that, although they may be good big hatchbacks, they are not good estates.

Next up was the Volkswagen Passat Syncro V6 estate, the top model in the new Passat estate range. Although not as roomy as an old-style Volvo estate, it has a much better standard of finish, and drives much better. If I wanted a new estate I’d buy a Passat, but not the Syncro V6 model, which at £25,000 is rather pricey.

Stick with one of the turbodiesel or petrol front-drive models, and feel smug every time you see a far pricier, but no better, Mercedes or Volvo pass by.

A Volvo V70R AWD came next. This is a Volvo estate unlike any other Volvo estate, more motorway racer than protective shell for motorists of a nervous disposition. The standard V70 is Britain’s best-seller, the stylish heir to the old green wellie, Labrador and luvvy type of Volvo.

But in V70R AWD (for All Wheel Drive) mode it epitomises New Volvo, a firm fast breaking away from its “sensible shoes” image and eager to make the motoring equivalent of multi-coloured air-cushioned trainers. The V70R AWD is a Ferrari wearing family car clothes. I loved it, even though I thought it was crazy. One minute you’re carrying pots and plants back from the garden centre, feeling all green and virtuous and awfully sensible; the next you’re revving that turbocharged powerhouse of a motor around to the red line and racing away from the traffic lights like a kid driving your first sports car.

There is nothing sporty about the Subaru Forester, one of the first of the new breed of off-roading estates. These offer some of the go-anywhere virtues of a Land Rover – by dint of their high ground clearance and four-wheel drive – but, being based on normal estates, they are more car-like on tarmac. Volvo has just launched a rival (the V70 XC); BMW and Audi will soon have their own go-anywhere estates.

This proliferation has had one unusual casualty, however. Sales of the really big, commodious estates – which put carrying capacity before style – are evaporating. Volvo is to announce that its upcoming new big car, the S80 – successor to the 940 – won’t be offered in estate form.

The traditional square-back substance-before-style Volvo estate is dead.

Huge carrying capacity, it seems, is the one thing estate car buyers no longer demand.



Colossal thrust from the supercharged 4.0-litre V8 catapults the XKR from 0-60mph in 5.2 seconds. The fastest production Jaguar ever comes in coupe, form, left, or convertible, below

Like a cat out of hell

Road test Jaguar XKR, by John Simister

Some say Jaguar’s XKR isn’t all it could be. Too soft, they declare, too much the image-enhancing boulevardier, not enough the driver-enthralling performance machine. It’s fast, of course, and it looks curvily racy in the old Jaguar sports-car idiom, but it’s no Nineties E-type. And they have a point.

Jaguar’s engineers have always known this. When the XKR’s V8 engine was unveiled two years ago, the project engineer Martin Joyce told me tales of wild XK8 engines they had concocted for various bizarre tests. “Some had open exhausts, and they sounded rather good. We’re all petrolheads at heart here.” Clearly, they were itching to create a truly sporting, hard-edged XKR, a car to show the world that Jaguar still knew how to do it instead of living on past glories. And now, with a year and a half’s sales success behind it, the XKR has been force-fed some power food and sent to the gym. The result is the Jaguar XKR, its 4.0-litre V8 engine’s power pumped up by a supercharger, its suspension and steering made firmer, its rear tyres made stickier, its brakes made stronger.

You can recognise an XKR by its stainless steel mesh front grille, the E-type-like louvers on its bonnet, the 10-spoke wheels and the slim spoiler on its boot. Together, they signal the most ballistically rapid production Jaguar there has ever been. Peak power of 363bhp is why, plus a monstrous 372lb ft of pulling ability. The standard ZF transmission isn’t strong enough to cope, so Jaguar buys its XKR units in from Mercedes-Benz.

The interior is unchanged from the XK8, although some of that car’s sportier options are standard in the XKR. One of these is the Computer Active Technology Suspension (CATS), which automatically stiffens under acceleration, braking or cornering. The settings are modified for the XKR to give a crisper, sportier feel, helped further by firm and precise steering. You can properly sense what is going on under the wheels when you’re cornering quickly, the better to enjoy the sort of agility and wickedness you never quite get in the XK8.

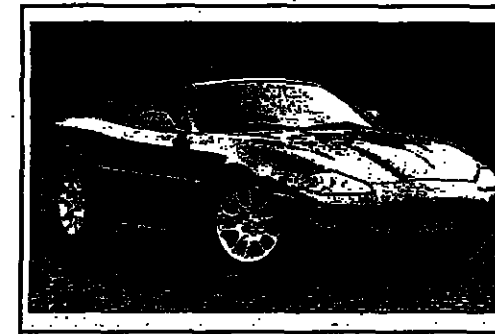
This is as well, because things happen quickly when the supercharger is blowing hard into the engine. An electronic limiter is supposed to stop the Jaguar from straying beyond 155mph, assuming you ever have the chance; without it, 170mph or so would be possible. Such speeds are merely the by-product of vast power matched to gearing that’s designed for serene and reasonably economical cruising at more normal speeds.

If the mood takes you, you can scorch to 60mph in 5.2 seconds. Just switch off the traction control, push the accelerator to the floor and let colossal thrust and the automatic transmission do the rest. You can overtake almost anything, engine wailing then building to a cackle the way V8s do, supercharger humming. You can choose a “sport” setting for the gearbox, or select the five gears man-

ually, but there’s no point. Leave it to its own devices, let it slip seamlessly from gear to gear. I have never experienced a better automatic.

The power, the roadholding and the handling make the XKR a thrilling big-hearted companion as you’ll find this side of a Ferrari. It’s a comfortable one, too, with its leather-trimmed cabin, CD stacker, air-conditioning and acreage of wood. It comes either as natural walnut or lacquered in translucent black, which would be my choice.

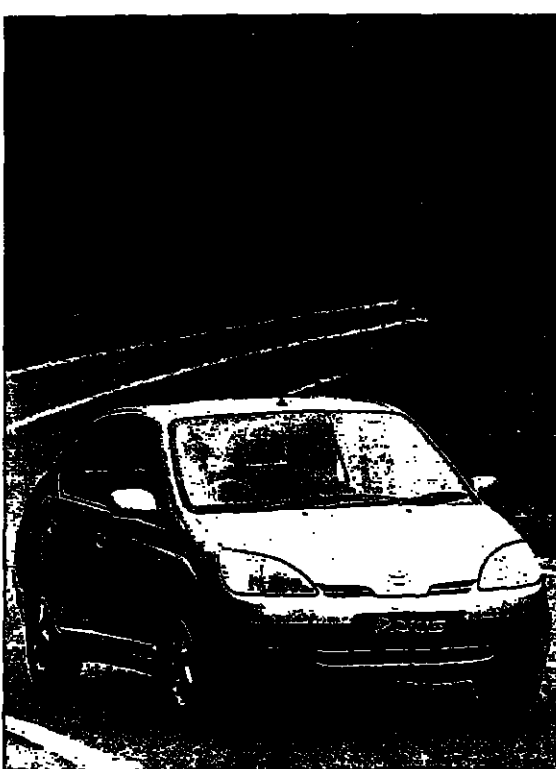
The other choice is between coupe and convertible. Either way, you won’t find a more stimulating route to automotive relaxation. The XKR does all the things a Jaguar should, but it does them with a track-racer’s edge. An E-type for the Nineties? Maybe. One of the most exciting and satisfying GT cars you can buy? That’s nearer the mark.



JAGUAR XKR – Specifications
Prices: £59,300 (coupe), £66,300 (convertible).
Engines: 3996cc supercharged V8, 32 valves, 363bhp at 6,150rpm.
Transmissions: Five-speed automatic gearbox, rear-wheel drive.
Performance: top speed 155mph, 0-60 in 5.2sec, 15-20mpg.

Rivals
Aston Martin DB7: £84,950. Conceptually

close to the XKR, supercharged but uses a Jaguar-based six-cylinder engine. You pay for hand-built exclusivity, but it doesn’t buy you a better car.
BMW 840Ci: £57,470. Cheaper than Jaguar, but not as fast or as enjoyable to drive. Looks dramatic but is growing old now.
Porsche 911: from £64,650. Latest 911 is a truly exciting drive, more “physical” than Jaguar but less comfortable. Like DB7, can be had with manual transmission.



Toyota’s Prius boasts twice the fuel efficiency of conventional petrol-engined vehicles

Where there’s fire without smoke

The Japanese hybrid Prius is the best option for pollution-free motoring, says James Rupper

I’m a lapsed member of the Battery Vehicle Society, and it is not hard to find out why. Although it is a worthy aim to find an environmentally clean way to power your next car, battery technology just isn’t up to speed at the moment. Range is limited, the batteries are heavy, and although charging them may be a simple process, finding somewhere to plug in when you roll to a halt on the M25 is going to be difficult. So until the technology can offer the performance, range and practicality of a petrol engine, electric power will be as dead as a flat battery.

However, Toyota think they may have come up with a solution by combining a conventional petrol engine with a silent electric one. They have given this working car a name, Prius, and put it on sale, but only in Japan.

The Prius manages to achieve twice the fuel efficiency of conventional petrol-engined cars,

offering at least 1,000 kilometres from a tankful of petrol. It also cuts HC, CO and NOx emissions on the road to a tenth of those allowed under stringent Japanese regulations.

How does it work? Well, squeezed under the bonnet is a light, efficient and low-revving 1.5 litre petrol engine. That is joined to a gear train that acts as a clever automatic transmission. Finally an electric motor and generator fits on the other end to complete the hybrid package.

The key to the mechanical efficiency of this system is the electronic control of power to ensure that energy is conserved. The engine runs at an optimum 4,000 revs per minute and its main function is to drive the wheels, but any excess output is used to recharge the batteries.

The batteries are also recharged by regenerative braking: when the brakes are applied the energy from the wheels is transferred to the batteries. In turn, the batteries supply extra power via the electric motor when required for ascending a hill, or overtaking. In situations where the engine cannot run efficiently, or produces high emissions, for instance when the car is at a standstill in traffic, then it is switched off altogether.

So what is it like in practice? Impressive. The Prius is just like a conventional car, but quieter. In the cabin you turn the key and hear nothing so harsh as a rumbling engine, or even the hum of an electric motor.

The Prius is definitely a car you can live with, though the brakes are fierce and the steering too light, a combination of the regenerative brakes and Japanese specification. It is at home in an urban and light commuter setting, but coped

competently on the motorway with equivalent performance to a Toyota Corolla 1.6 automatic (100mph top speed) but greater frugality, with the potential of more than 70 miles per gallon.

The interior is roomy, especially for rear seat passengers. The dashboard is interesting with mainly digital instrumentation and a video screen display that works the stereo and a satellite navigation system, and even shows you which motors are supplying the power. Despite there being a battery pack positioned behind the rear seats, the boot is usefully deep.

Hybrid cars have been talked about for too long. Prototypes have been quietly forgotten about. Not only does the Prius styling look good but the package is sensible, and the hybrid power route means that nationwide outdoor three-pin plugs are not required. However, Battery Vehicle Society purists might question the value of having two motors and the use of air-conditioning.

For the moment the Prius is the best and only alternative the Japanese have got. There is a three-month waiting list, and I was told by a spokesman to expect an announcement soon. Toyota certainly wouldn’t go to all the trouble of flying half a dozen cars over just to show off. In Japan it sells for the equivalent of £10,000, and Toyota are rumoured to be subsidising each car to the tune of £20,000. It is unlikely to sell for anything near £10,000 in Britain.

Prius may not be the answer to environment-friendly motoring, but it is a start. In the meantime I’m going to start the Hybrid Vehicle Society. Anyone else want to join?

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HAZ 401	1,000	854 LMA	800	P18 25	1,200	XLX 35	1,200
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The TT comes in two engine versions, both using 1.8-litre 20-valve turbocharged four-cylinder motors. The more powerful version belts out 225bhp, and boasts a top speed of 150mph. There's also a 180bhp version, good for an entirely adequate 140mph. Both use quattro four-wheel-drive transmission.

The TT's interior is almost as striking as the exterior. Bare aluminium, leather and Alcantara – a synthetic, suede-like material – are all widely used. The rear seats – not likely to be very spacious – can also fold forward, increasing boot space.

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What's it like living above the shop?

Genetta Vedrickas talks to people who have chosen the ultimate in urban living: a flat above a retail establishment

Friday evening queues outside fish and chip shops show that the pre-weekend fish ritual isn't just for Catholics. But for those lucky souls who live above the chippy the smell of frying fish isn't confined to Fridays - which leads to the question: what is the attraction of living over a shop?

Paul Williams, negotiator for Holden Matthews estate agents, in Upper Street, Islington, north London, is currently marketing a two-bedroom flat on the Essex Road for £225,000. Unusually, the property has enormous roof terraces - one is 50ft long - yet it is also above a vacant shop, and so far there are no takers. "These flats tend to be on busy roads, and people worry because it can be an unknown quantity. Buyers should check planning applications to make sure there can be no A3 use," says Paul (for bureaucracy novices, A3 means "restaurant").

However, he advises buying property above shops for investment purposes. "You get a good yield for your money and a bit more space. You may not get the growth of other locales, but some tenants aren't fussy about their location."

Ninette Farache, director of HAM estates, in north London, finds that properties above shops do take longer to sell or let, but seasons play an important role. "Spring is the worst time to let, but in August you can rent out a shed." Ninette has a one-bedroom property for rent above her offices, but has had little success so far: is the estate agency itself off-putting?

Fellow agent Marcus Kemp, of King's Road, in central London, defends the profession: "At least we go home by 7pm. If the shop turns into a late-night video shop, then you've got a problem." Marcus has sold many properties in the popular King's Road, but some have proved harder than others. "A flat above a kebab shop was a nightmare," says Marcus, blaming high insurance premiums for buyers' reluctance, as flats above restaurants can face fire hazards. Mortgage companies pose further problems, with their traditional aversion to lending on these properties.

Marcus perceives two categories. "Mansion blocks over businesses sell well in contrast to



'And they're coming up to the third fence!': for Stephanie West, living above a bookie's is a lot of fun, with few disadvantages

Photograph: Neville Elder

traditional little shops with flats above." The reasons seem obvious, yet Marcus holds an alternative view. "The benefits of living above a shop are enormous. In a block you can't do anything without annoying the neighbours but above a shop you can party all night long."

Walk around any high street with an eye to the spaces above, and you see them: dingy curtains, boarded windows, signs of neglect and forgotten spaces which are hard to visualise as homes. Housing associations and insightful local authorities have long developed policies to transform retail space into homes, but with developers catching on to the benefits, competition for space is tough.

Retailers must also be persuaded of the advantages. John Lett, assistant chief planner for the London Planning Advisory

Committee (LPAC), is convinced that one way to revitalise town centres - particularly at night - is to get people living in them again, and this would also make them more economically viable. John also believes that the planning system should be more proactive: "It should shake up housing colleagues and the Chancellor of the Exchequer."

LPAC is partly funding a study, currently at draft stage, looking at potential capacity and demand in London for dwellings in and over shops and the mechanisms necessary for improving them. The Civic Trust, which is being consulted for the study, has identified a need to promote the benefits for small shopkeepers and is considering incentives to encourage converting and refurbishing retail spaces. Some large retailers are already convinced. Martins Newsagents was paying

£250,000 in empty property rates and now finds it can get an annual rental income of £400,00 from the previously vacant space.

People living above shops seem to be divided in their enthusiasm. Stephanie West rents a two-storey maisonette above William Hill bookmakers in South London. The location sounds unappealing but the enormous roof terrace with its leafy views, and Stephanie's ardour, dispel any distaste you may have for urban living. Did she specifically choose a flat over a shop? "I absolutely lucked into this. I was in New York and was used to noise, 24-hour shopping and decent weather. I was dreading returning to London."

Stephanie arrived back with no cash (her last £50 went on quarantine fees for her Doberman pinscher); she found her "incredibly cheap" flat through a

friend. Three doors down from a Seven Eleven, she has all-night shopping; she also has occasional good weather. She takes full advantage of the situation.

"I can put my coat over my nightie, slip out and get a bottle of bubbly and a video and be back in bed within three minutes," says Stephanie, who has better plans for her disposable income than mortgage payments. She is minutes from her bank, a dry cleaner's, a delicatessen and restaurants: "People are always dropping in," she says. "It's just the most wonderful, convenient space; you can hop out and catch a bus or taxi within minutes."

Stephanie was single when she moved in but now lives with her partner Simon and son Alexander.

Are there disadvantages? "Living above a bookie's brings smoke and noise. And they're

coming up to the third fence!" shouts Stephanie, in a passable imitation. However, she prefers bookies to estate agents. "They employ young men with posh cars, so you can never park."

The family feels secure in their flat. "Alexander is adept at urban living and would never lurch off a pavement," she says, and the entrance is overlooked, which deters burglars.

Your safety may depend on the type of business below you. A friend once spent several harrowing hours tied up with a gun at his head thanks to a raid on the sub-post office below his flat - but that's another story. Next time you're out shopping and spy a woman with a nightie under her coat, don't despair. She's not symptomatic of urban societal breakdown; she's part of that happy breed who live over the shop.

PENNY JACKSON



Click and you're in the picture

The days when you have to rely on an artistically arranged corner of a room to gain an impression of the whole could be numbered. Imagination is no longer always necessary for those who house hunt on the computer. With a click of the mouse you can turn 360 degrees and check out exactly what is in the room. Is the ceiling really that high? What kind of windows are they?

Winkworth, the London estate agents, have just launched a Walk Inside Tour in conjunction with IPDX. The IPDX technology - a form of digital photography - will be used with selected properties and the results so far have proved impressive. As yet Winkworth uses only text on its website, since not all agents have digital cameras, and browsers easily overlook something special without pictures to entice them.

A Georgian house on the Thames recently sold through the Walk Inside Tour to a buyer who had no intention of buying on that particular stretch of the river. But he was so struck by the whole look of the property that he offered a higher price than the one on the table from a local buyer. He was able to see the house from the inside and outside, back and front as well as getting views of the street and the Thames. Website: www.winkworth.co.uk

Rumours of a shortage of properties for sale are exaggerated, according to Mark Chick of Leslie Marsh & Co, from Notting Hill, one of London's hot spots. He sees supply running at an exceptionally healthy level, which will calm the nerves of all those fearful of putting their homes on the market in case they find themselves homeless. "There is a constant temptation to play down supply, but the fact is our instructions are now nearly 50 per cent up on this time last year." Although they still can't keep up with demand, buyers can rest assured that something else will come up, adds Mr Chick.

Beryl might just be the answer for the odd weekend. She is a 70ft narrow boat moored on the Oxford Canal two miles from the city centre and is for sale for £40,000. For that you get a living area with stained-glass windows, portholes and panelling, and two sleeping cabins. There is a shower room and, in case anyone is getting too relaxed, a solid-fuel Rayburn to riddle out every so often. The agents are Cluttons Daniel Smith: 01865 793900.

First, find your forgotten shell

Relics from another age offer scope for the sort of conversions that change unfashionable addresses into the haunts of film stars. Penny Jackson reports

A converted stable block and a church tower have more than their 18th-century origins in common. They are both in south London and carry a price tag of £1m. On the edge of Clapham Common, Robin and Caroline Totterman have created an oasis in Nightingale Lane. They have transformed the derelict building tucked away between flats, which briefly saw life as a restaurant, into a 3,200-sq-ft home that combines all the appeal of a spacious loft with details of the old stables. Both refurbishments were a labour of love, taken on by enthusiasts who felt instinctively the potential of the buildings. Architects' ideas often clashed with their own and so they drew their own designs, keeping professional input to a minimum. They learnt the hard way and at times thought their ambitions had got the better of them.

When the Tottermans finally moved in, by now with a small baby, they were suddenly assaulted with horrendous smells. "We thought it was a gas leak, then the drains but no one could find anything. We also had problems with the electricity. In the end we took up the new floor and found that the open drains from the stables were letting in the smell from the sewers and rats were eating through the wires," recalls Robin. "We had to seal it and lay the whole of the ground floor again."

Since it is open plan and about 50 ft in

length, this was no small task. But despite this setback the house had begun to take shape. "We would sit and debate all the details with the builder as we went along," he says. "We became our own developers."

It took a year for the purchase of the stables to be negotiated. They bought during the property doldrums and from an asking price of £500,000 they talked their way down to about a third of that. "We walked past it every day and from the moment we walked in we knew it was just what we wanted," says Caroline. She is no stranger to design. Her background is in the theatre, as is that of her family - Oliver Reed, the actor, is her uncle - and she designed many of the visual merchandising campaigns for In-Specs, the trendy eyewear company founded by Robin. "We were clear we wanted a lot of space," they both say. In the courtyard outside the kitchen the original stable flooring has been restored. A spiral staircase leads up to a roof garden off a bedroom and a sauna sits in what was an outside passageway. Now it is on the market with a £1m price tag. "It was a labour of love," says Caroline. "We never imagined five years ago we would be selling it at this price."

Edward Caudwell, for the selling agents Aylesford, is seeing people moving south of the river who would never have dreamt of it a few years ago. "A million pounds is a psychological barrier, but when people realise they would be paying more like £3m in Chelsea, it isn't difficult to lure them out. I even blindfolded one buyer and drove him to Battersea. When he saw the house, he bought it." Even so, buyers will not be pushed into paying silly prices, he says.

In areas where houses are clearly in a different category from their neighbours, pricing can be difficult. Heather Pontifex, of FPD Savills, says that now precedents have been set in Wandsworth and



Stable life: Robin and Caroline Totterman say their conversion was a labour of love

Photograph: Kalpesh Lathiga

Clapham comparisons can be made, but in the case of Gypsy Tower, the spectacular church-tower conversion, it is much harder.

Every morning, Michael Rubino noted the burnt-out church in Gypsy Hill as he drove past on his way to work. Three and a half years later the vision that gripped him when he first stopped for a look has become the reality that drew Madonna four miles south of fashionable London to inspect. It is on the market at £1.2m.

It would be unique in any setting. Rubino, an interior designer, and his business partner Michael Edwards-Hammond

bought the church from a frankly incredulous diocese for £13,000. "Nobody wanted it," says Edwards-Hammond. "English Heritage, who were dealing with it, thought we were mad."

Rubino, who had always wanted to live in a church, took control from day one and set about the task with a passion. "If I had known what it would involve I would never have started," he admits. As it is, he has created a home with all the features of a modern development - closed-circuit TV, a lift, sprinklers in every room - the romance of a roof-top garden overlooking London, and where taking a bath means looking up

through a glass roof to the summit of the tower. He hunted down wall lights in Italy, appropriate for the enormously thick walls.

Edwards-Hammond began to watch the finances nervously as expert restorers repaired the charred timber and stone and whatever could be salvaged from the arsonist's vandalism. The only floor in existence was in the belfry and that was "two feet thick in pigeon droppings". Now it is enclosed by 44 windows. Below, in the clock room, the exposed workings of the clock have been repaired by the original makers. "We spent £600,000 on it in the end," says

Edwards-Hammond. Madonna is not the only celebrity to show an interest. "When I was in America I showed the pictures to Cher over lunch. She loved the place. Can you imagine her living there? No one would expect to find her drinking in a wine bar in Gypsy Hill."

You wouldn't have to blindfold anyone to buy south of the Thames if Cher exchanged a Malibu address for SE19.

The agents for Nightingale Lane are Aylesford (0171-351 2383) and Douglas & Gordon (0171-924 2000); for Gypsy Tower, FPD Savills (0181-877 1222).

Chill out in style

The sun's out and you want to take the heat out of your life. Rosalind Russell on where to find the coolest of coolers

It's always the same. After one fall of snow, there's not a to-boggan to be had in Hamleys. Come the Spring Bank Holiday, every watering can has vanished from garden-centre shelves. And after a couple of hot weekends the chances of finding an electric fan in the shops are as thin as an accountant's smile. Or, at least, finding one you wouldn't mind admitting you owned.

There is, after all, cool and cool. The coolest in looks are the retro chrome fans, like the ones seen in grainy old black-and-white movies and as classic as Humphrey Bogart's raincoat. They translate easily into warehouse conversion apartments, look smart on beechwood floors and don't clash with black leather and chrome furniture.

Prices vary enormously. For instance, an American-made high-powered three-speed air circulator fan sold mail order through Ocean costs £179, while Scotts of Stowe's Equinox brochure lists one so similar as to be indistinguishable at £99.95. Scotts' classic pedestal fan, height adjustable 59in-78in, with a 20in blade diameter costs £199.95. That and the desktop version (£79.95) are based on the design first produced in the 1930s. They have all-metal parts on a solid cast-iron base and have three speeds.

Most of the classic fans of the Twenties and Thirties were black stove enamel with gold edging lines, says Dave Woodcock, assistant curator of domestic technology at the Science Museum.

"There was a change in the Thirties when the fan - like ships and aeroplanes - became susceptible to design considerations," says Dave. "The chrome of the fan had a lot to do with the streamlining of ships, you can see it in the casting for the motor, the torpedo shape. Instead of being purely functional and put away when the weather turned cool, fans began to be looked on as a piece of furniture."

Now, says Dave, people are hankering after such classic designs, having tired of modern tat. The classic fan is as sought after as the 1932 model of the Anglepoise lamp, the Waring waterfall blender and the Westinghouse fridge (so cleverly tweaked by Smeg using the smooth shape but adding colour).

"The Thirties fan was a thing of great beauty," says Dave Woodcock. "Now there are very few all-metal objects around."

For good copies John Lewis sell an antique-style Sona desktop fan in either black or chrome at £59.50, while Purves and Purves stock a classic-design aluminium fan with a control dial on the base at £65.75.

The Conran Shop offers the Cinni classic fan with a black pedestal in several diameters, costing from £175 to £95 (the cheapest is non-oscillating). But they will obtain a floor-standing 400mm-diameter chrome fan to order, price £260.

Pifco has been making fans for more than 50 years, so had

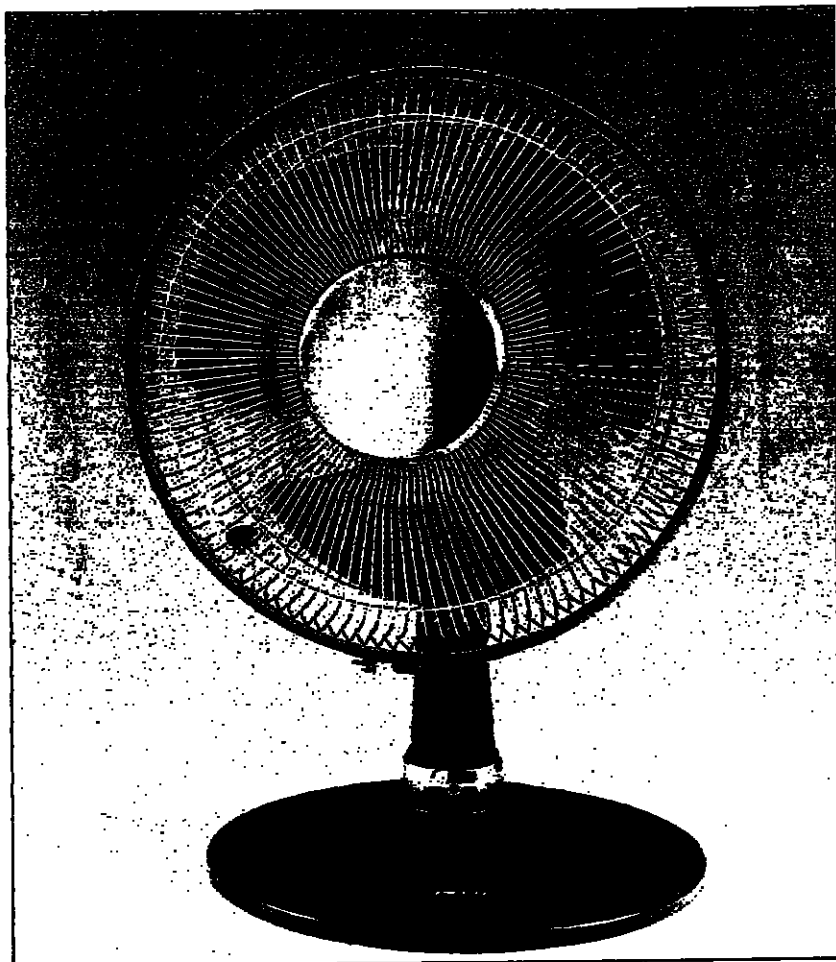
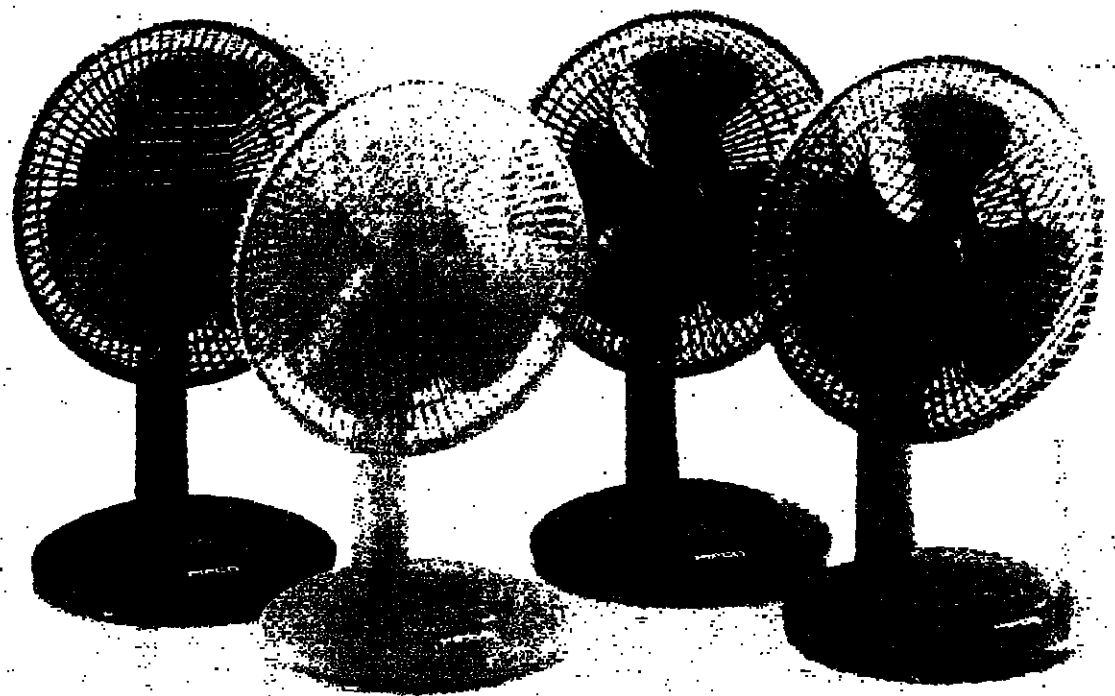
Cheerful and cheap: Pifco's Jelly Fans (above) and their classic desk version (right) give more expensive competitors a run for their money

little trouble reinventing the Fifties pedestal fan for their current range: it costs £44.95. The chrome and black 9in-diameter fan starts at £24.99.

"The popularity of home-improvement television programmes has made people very aware of design," says Jon Martin, Pifco's brand manager. "People want each room to look co-ordinated."

For cheap and cheerful, Pifco's new range of Jelly Fans are hard to beat. In four colours - tangerine, yellow, aquamarine and blue - they are fully oscillating and have a separate swivel joint allowing the head of the fan to be tilted up or down. They cost £14.99 and come with a three-year guarantee.

Availability and stockists: Equinox, 0870 600 44 33; John Lewis (Oxford Street), 0171-828 1000; Purves and Purves, 0171-580 8223; Conran Shop, 0171-589 7401; Pifco, 0161 947 3170.



THREE TO VIEW: AT £150,000

Rose Cottage at Glyn Garth, two miles from the Menai Bridge on the Isle of Anglesey, is a white-painted, 200-year-old cottage. The sitting-room has an Adam-style fireplace with an open fire, a beamed ceiling, dado rails, an exposed wooden floor and sash windows. The 16-ft kitchen has been fitted with antique oak units and has a brick inglenook fireplace with a Stanley oven. A rose cottage motif is included in the roof light and the windows beside the front door. The cottage has three bedrooms, a period-style fitted bathroom and a 12-ft summerhouse. £150,000 through Morgan Evans & Co. (01248 716817).



Lousown at Bigbury on Sea, near Kingsbridge in Devon, is a modern bungalow 25 yards from the beach, with views across to Hope Cove in the distance. The owners of the three-bedroom house say they would consider selling it furnished, should a buyer want it as a holiday home. It has a 22-ft sitting-room with views of the sea and an exposed stone fireplace. There's even a good view for the wash-up, from the 14-ft kitchen. Outside there is a garage/boat store and a raised terrace. An orchard of fruit trees may be bought separately. £149,500 through Fulfords (01584 853747).



April Cottage in Minchampton, Gloucestershire, is a period double-fronted townhouse built of Cotswold stone. Four miles from Stroud and the mainline railway station (London 90 minutes), the three-storey cottage has a 23-ft sitting-room with two Cotswold stone fireplaces on raised stone hearths. There are built-in bookshelves. A door leads to a spiral stone staircase down to the cellar. The main bedroom is on the second floor, with two more on the first floor. There are south-facing gardens with fruit bushes and a Wendy house. £149,500 through Murrays (01453 755552).



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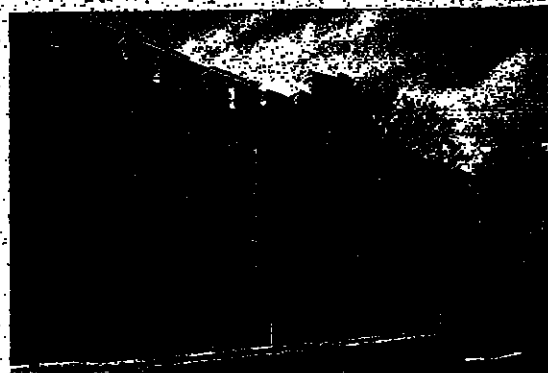
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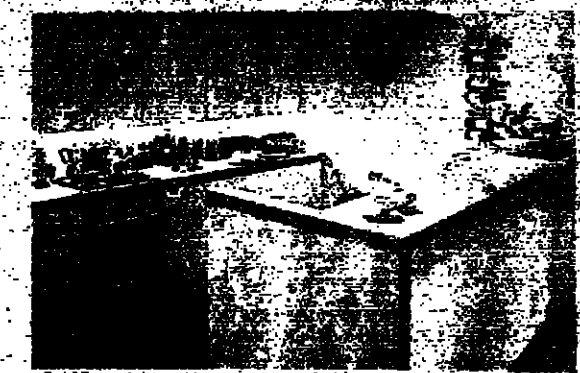
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